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REAGAN, MONDALE, AND TAXES

The right to die, by Richard Lamm

BARBARA EHRENREICH & JANE O'REILLY ON MISS AMERICA & THE MALE PSYCHE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

DISSOLUTE DYNASTY

Midge Decter on the fall of the house of Kennedy

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CORRESPONDENCE

KHOMEINI'S THOUGHTS

To the editors:

Hostile and contemptuous writing about Imam Khomeini is a common feature of the Western press, popular and pseudo-serious alike, but it may be appropriate to offer a response to Ernest Gellner's article, "What Khomeini Thinks" (TNR, June 18), which is largely based on material drawn from my book, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini.*

Mr. Gellner gives his game away by beginning with some of the Imam's rulings on ritual purity, intended, no doubt, to titillate the American reader and reawaken his flagging interest in the monster known as "Islamic fundamentalism." These are taken from a volume entitled *Sayings of the Ayatollah Khomeini,* of which he says that "its purpose is to supply the public with a sample of . . . Khomeini's ideas." On the contrary, its purpose is to excite ridicule and shock in the Western reader through arbitrary selection, misleading arrangement, and truncated translation. Mr. Gellner clearly has no appreciation of the place of ritual purity within the overall framework of Islam nor any awareness of the fact that all handbooks of Islamic law begin with a discussion of *tahara.* He says that "the type of casuistry practiced by Khomeini is not idiosyncratic"; in that case, why the emphasis on such matters as a leading characteristic of the Imam's world view? What is a distinctive characteristic of the Imam's thought and action is an implacable hostility to Zionism and other forms of foreign encroachment on the Islamic world. It is this, of course, that truly disturbs Mr. Gellner.

Mr. Gellner finds my volume "somewhat misleading and distorting," taking issue first of all with my referring to Khomeini as "Imam," and the assertion that the particular sense in which this title is applied to him—quite different from the case of the Twelve Imams—is well understood in Iran. I stand by this assertion, in the absence of evidence to the contrary. After all, Shiites of the Arab world have used the title "Imam" for some of their contemporary leaders without any confusion arising; why should the same not apply in Iran? Mr. Gellner questions whether "the average Iranian Shiite is aware and respectful" of the different senses in which the title is used. In my experience, "the average Iranian Shiite" is more discerning and intelligent in such matters than the average Western writer on Islam.

More serious is Mr. Gellner's general charge that my book "refrains from telling the whole truth and gives us a . . . bowdlerized Khomeini." Presumably he has in mind my omission of piquant rulings on *tahara,* a deliberate omission in view of my intention to facilitate an understanding of what is distinctive about the Imam. Beyond that, I wonder on what basis of knowledge of the Imam, his career, his writings, the Persian language, Iranian history, or Shiite Islam, Mr. Gellner claims to be more concerned than myself with an integral and faithful presentation of Khomeini. He suspects that I am concerned with diminishing "his [Khomeini's] offensiveness to the Western reader," but he should rest assured that I have no interest in protecting him from offense.

Then there is the fact that Mr. Gellner twice identifies me as a "convert to Islam" (of course, everyone knows about the indecorous enthusiasm of converts; Mr. Gellner's message is not particularly subtle here) and speculates on "what attracts Algar to Khomeini." Conceivably I might reply by identifying Mr. Gellner as a Jew and speculating on the extent to which this identity has influenced his reaction to the Imam, but I feel that this kind of labeling indulged in by Mr. Gellner is an innovation that does not deserve to be encouraged.

As for the main thesis of his article—that Imam Khomeini has given to Shiite Islam in Iran a Sunni content—the best one may say of it is that it is based on a typically Orientalist schematized and oversimplified analysis of what distinguishes Shiite and Sunni Islam from each other. It is entirely of a piece with the grotesque and historically impossible painting of dervishes chosen to illustrate his article.

HAMID ALGAR
Middlesex, England

Mr. Gellner replies:

Mr. Algar amiably assures me that he has no interest in protecting me from offense. More accurately, he might have said that he is very eager to offend me. He'll have to try harder to succeed. As an Iranian specialist, he is well-placed to detect flaws in my interpretation of Khomeini. Though he correctly identifies my main thesis, his long letter, rich in counterassertion and abuse, is woefully short on argument and evidence. None is offered against my interpretation. He may do better in the future. I shall continue to read his work with interest, flawed though it is by a bizarrely selective moral sensitivity.

QUOTA BULL

To the editors:

In "Double Reverse Discrimination" (TNR, July 9), Jefferson Morley makes an intriguing argument in support of the Starrett City housing project's practice of discriminating between black and white applicants. Admission of too many blacks, Mr. Morley argues, would inexorably cause "white flight"; the resulting rise in the black occupancy rate would lead to dramatically increased "crime, vandalism, and management neglect" at Starrett City.

But generalizations about the personalities, life-styles, or living habits of a minority group, as a basis for denying members of that group scarce societal goods such as housing or education, are psychologically stigmatizing and morally offensive. That such generalizations may be "realistic" in some statistical sense makes them no more acceptable; believers in inherent racial inferiority make similar statistical claims. Nor does official action based on racial stereotypes become acceptable when the actors are well-intentioned administrators acting on the basis of stereotypes held by their white clientele.

It is this assumption about the effects of increased minority occupancy—and the stereotype about minority behavior underlying that assumption—that distinguishes the Starrett City quota from more traditional forms of affirmative action. If any racial generalization underlies minority-inclusive quotas, it is one of victimization of minorities by a prejudiced society. Not only is this generalization far less offensive and stigmatizing than Starrett City's, but it is tempered by the very tangible benefits given members of those groups about which this generalization is being made.

Government perpetuation of all-too-traditional limitations on quality hous-

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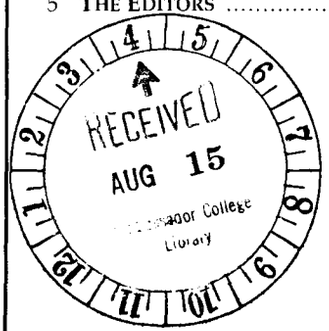

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FROM WASHINGTON

A Ton Of Steel

A ton of American-made steel from a big unionized company like U.S. Steel costs about $500 f.o.b. Pittsburgh, more or less, depending on how shrewdly you bargain. This covers something like $140 of labor costs (according to the most optimistic industry estimates) at $22 an hour, plus raw materials, energy, overhead, a piece of the chairman's $600,000 salary, and maybe this year for the first time recently a tiny sliver of profit.

A ton of imported steel costs, on average, about $360, even after shipping and import duties. American steel producers say that this reflects hidden subsidies by foreign governments and an inflated dollar. Perhaps so. But it also reflects more efficient plants and lower wages abroad. In Brazil, for example, labor costs $2.13 an hour, and the head of the government steel holding company makes less than $20,000 a year.

President Reagan must decide by September 24 whether to restrict foreign steel, based on the findings of the International Trade Commission that imports—currently taking a quarter of the market—are causing severe harm to the domestic steel industry. Uncertain about Reagan's intentions, the steel industry is pursuing legislation in Congress for a flat 15 percent import quota on foreign steel.

When you stop a $360 ton of steel at the border and roll your own ton of steel for $500 instead, someone is out $140. That someone might be a car buyer, for instance, since a car contains about a ton of steel. It's like a $140 tax on cars for the benefit of the employees, executives, and stockholders of the steel industry. Yet if that car buyer makes the average industrial wage, his income is only three-fifths of a steelworker's. This means that every three employed steelworkers could hire two laid-off steelworkers out of their own wages to do nothing but stand around and watch them work, and all five would still make as much as the fellow they propose to charge an extra $140 in order to "save jobs" in the steel industry. Not only would this absurd arrangement create more jobs in this country than a quota, it also would save the jobs of those poor Brazilians whose livelihoods depend on exports to the United States. That's why a quota is even more absurd.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that a 15 percent steel quota would raise the average price of all steel by about 9 percent, costing consumers of steel products an extra $7.7 billion a year by 1989. It would create thirty-four thousand additional jobs in the domestic steel industry, thus costing the economy a mere (where's my calculator?) $226,000 a year per job. Meanwhile, the higher price of steel would divert $7.7 billion from other industries, thereby destroying jobs as well. Since over $2 billion of that $7.7 billion would go abroad, in the form of higher prices for the foreign steel that still comes in, a quota almost surely would end up destroying more jobs than it creates. And even this morose calculus is based on the unlikely assumption that other countries won't retaliate with quotas on our exports. Why shouldn't they? We've got no monopoly on stupidity.

These are the unbending economics of protectionism. Unfortunately, the politics of protectionism are equally unbending. The group seeking protection from foreign competition is self-aware, cohesive, politically organized. The much larger group of people who lose from any particular exercise of protectionism is diverse, unorganized, and mostly unidentifiable. In the case of steel quotas, this group includes consumers of steel products, workers who don't get hired in industries other than steel, and workers in industries potentially threatened by foreign retaliation.

Protectionism is the very model of "special interest" politics. What seems good for each of us in our particular corners of the economy is ruinous for all of us as participants in the economy as a whole. Higher-priced steel makes our automobile industry less competitive, which leads to automobile protectionism, which is a tax on steelworkers along with everybody else. Politicians of both parties decry the other party's pandering to "special interests." Yet it's almost asking too much to expect President Reagan, facing a deadline barely one month before the election, to resist this particular bit of pandering when Walter Mondale is waiting to fill any pander gap.

Imports are only a small part of the problems facing the steel industry, and unfair imports are barely a problem at all. That's why protectionism is no answer even for steel itself. Coming out of a deep recession, the industry faces an economy that needs less and less of its product. Cars are getting smaller, aluminum and (yes, Benjamin) plastics are replacing steel in all sorts of manufacturing, and manufacturing itself is losing ground to services. The large domestic steelmakers have behaved stupidly for two decades; their biggest competition today comes not from abroad but from so-called "mini-mills" here in the United States, which have built advanced plants and held down labor costs.

Foreign countries protect their steel industries from imports, but so do we. American steel has cowered behind some kind of trade barrier for most of the time since 1968. Foreign governments sometimes subsidize investment by their manufacturers, but so do we. What do you think Reagan's 1981 tax break for business depreciation was all about? Foreign companies sometimes "dump" their steel in the American market. But if "dumping" means selling at below production cost, the American steelmakers have been "dumping" themselves for the past few years, since they've been losing money on every ton they sell (and *not* making it up in volume). What else are you supposed to do during a recession? A nation like Brazil doesn't need unfair trade practices to undersell U.S. Steel. Almost all of its plants are the most modern, efficient type. It has plentiful iron ore and an eager—indeed desperate—work force.

This desperation deserves sympathy. Among other reasons, Brazil is one of the countries that's in hock to the international banks, which means that Brazil's economic problems are our problems, too. The best favor we can do for Brazil and other countries in similar straits is to offer them a market for their exports so they can climb out of debt. By sharing the benefit of their efficiency and cheap labor, it's the best favor we can do ourselves as well.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 27, 1984

TAX TANGLES

Whoever is the next President, 1985 will bring a national debate about who shall pay taxes. We have Ronald Reagan to thank for that. There is no reasonable prospect that growth, at any sustainable rate, will be sufficient to ease projected federal deficits. And there is an undisputed consensus that those deficits are a route to national bankruptcy.

The debate will come; but we fear for its quality and its outcome. Already, as has so often been the case in the Reagan years, the conservative side of the debate has sounded a more certain trumpet than the liberal. Conservatives have a very clear theory of economic growth, and a tax policy that logically follows: private capital formation is a source of national wealth; therefore taxes on corporate profits, on dividends, on family fortunes, and on capital gains should be as low as possible, and taxes on personal income should be flat rather than progressive.

That theory, put into practice, has gouged huge holes out of the tax code. Hence the deficit. And it has brought us to a point, according to our friends at Citizens for Tax Justice, where the total base that is given away in loopholes is now almost as large as the base that is taxed. In fiscal 1983 there was eighty-nine cents of tax expenditure for every dollar of tax. In corporate collections, there was $37 billion in tax collections and $62 billion in tax expenditures. There is no evidence that this massive tax subsidy has done much for economic growth. The current recovery is instructively Keynesian, a pure product of deficit spending, and the fact that the rich have been designated to do the spending is immaterial. What has changed is the balance of who pays taxes. If half the tax base is exempt from taxation, then the other half must bear twice the load.

The Reagan years have also given us a brand of tax politics in which the function of the "tax-writing" committees of Congress is less to tax than to spend. Since 1981 the appropriation window has been sealed shut, but the tax subsidy window has been thrown wide open. Even in the recently enacted "deficit reduction"—a politically painful election-year tax hike—Congress couldn't resist adding several billion dollars' worth of additional special interest loopholes. The tax-writing committees have become prized assignments, not for the innocent pleasure of fashioning national tax policy but for the lucrative vice of servicing corporate PAC-men. The capital formation ideology gives members of Congress and economic royalists ideological camouflage for doing what comes naturally. It disguises the mutual massage parlor as a fiscal health club.

The orgy has gone on so long that tax expenditure at last must take a breather. The next Administration and Congress will spend much of 1985 debating how to raise new revenue. But the danger is that instead of restoring some taxes on the freeloaders, Congress will place an even greater load on current taxpayers, through new taxes on consumption. For liberals are less sure than conservatives of what they believe about taxes and economic policy.

Not so long ago, liberals championed the progressive income tax and shunned consumption taxes as a regressive burden on those least able to pay. Unfortunately, despite the evident failure of supply-side economics, the malarkey about capital formation and tax policy has taken deep root, even in the liberal consciousness. Many liberals who should know better wish to tax consumption on the theory that the United States suffers mainly from a shortage of savings and investment. In reality, America's rates of savings and capital investment have been quite constant since World War II. The net savings rate did fall during the Reagan Administration, but only because the huge federal deficit has eaten up so much of the personal savings supply—another refutation, if any were needed, of the supply-side mythology.

We predict that if Mr. Reagan is reelected, and finally owns up to the need for more revenue, his people will concoct some awful blend of flat-rate income and con-

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sumption taxes. The American Council for Capital Formation, which wrote much of the script for the first Reagan tax program, is a good leading indicator of the next ideological fashion. When the Council and its tireless chairman, Charls Walker, begin shifting from wide lapels to narrow ones, it means that Congress will soon be heading for the tailor—or maybe for the cleaners. Lately, Mr. Walker has been singing the praises of value-added taxes. It would seem that the good people of the capital formation lobby have correctly discerned that somebody will bear a hefty tax increase next year, and they want to be sure that this somebody isn't them.

In this climate, Democrats and liberals need to figure out what they believe, and fast. Those among them who truly believe that tax fairness and economic equity are bad for economic growth should have the courage of their convictions and join the Republican Party. The rest should begin looking at proposals like the "fair tax" bill proposed by Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey and Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri, which Walter Mondale has been edging toward embracing. Bradley-Gephardt trades a broader base for lower rates, getting rid of most personal tax deductions and permitting a lowering of rates to a top rate of 30 percent, with a vast majority of taxpayers paying only 14 percent. It greatly simplifies the tax code, but without sacrificing the principle of progressivity. The conservative variant of the "flat tax," designed by Robert Hall and Alvin Rabushka of the Hoover Institution, also simplifies the tax code by getting rid of personal deductions, but taxes all personal income at a uniform 19 percent—thereby creating a massive shift in the tax burden from the well-off onto the middle class and the working poor.

Another conservative proposal with perverse appeal to some liberals is the idea that the only income which should be taxed is income that is spent. Under what is sometimes termed a "progressive expenditure tax," a taxpayer could subtract from taxable income all income set aside as savings, and the remainder (that which was spent) would be taxed at a progressive rate. That sounds fine in theory, but in practice it would allow a person with a million dollars in investment income to save $900,000 of it and pay a tax only on the $100,000 that was spent. If that millionaire were taxed at the 30 percent rate on his taxable income, his true tax rate would be just 3 percent ($30,000 out of a million dollars). Why begrudge the millionaire his tax windfall? Not out of "envy," but because there is no evidence that tax incentives are needed to coax savings out of people who can afford to save—and because if those with financial means don't pay taxes, then somebody else has to pay. There is no way that a "progressive" expenditure tax could be anything but steeply regressive. It would codify all the recent piecemeal tax preferences, like the "all-savers" gimmick and the I.R.A. write-off, into a single gigantic loophole.

A look at the tax policy of other nations suggests how nonsensical the claims about tax inequity and capital formation truly are. The world's two top economic performers, Germany and Japan, both have tax systems with fewer loopholes and more equity than our own. Great Britain, with the greatest tax favoritism for capital investment, has the poorest rate of actual investment. One recent study for the National Bureau of Economic Research, by Mervyn King of the University of Birmingham, England, and Don Fullerton of the Hoover Institution—both of them reliably laissez-faire economists—found that the actual economic performance of four major nations was exactly the opposite of what the capital formation school would predict. Germany, with the highest taxes on capital, had the *best* rate of capital formation; the United States with the second highest tax rate on capital (pre-Reagan), had the second best record; Sweden, ranking third in capital taxes, had the third highest capital formation; and Britain, with a negative tax on capital, had the worst performance. Said King and Fullerton: "The results are surprising to say the least."

Japan, with the highest rate of savings and investments of all, has no value-added tax, no consumption tax, lower sales tax rates than the United States, and the highest effective tax rates on corporate profits in the world. With a gross national product one third the size of ours, Japan actually collects more corporate tax revenue than we do. That doesn't mean we can, in a kind of liberal parody of voodoo economics, encourage capital formation by taxing it; it simply means that tax incentives as the premier tool of economic policy have been ludicrously oversold. "Tax laws do not hold the key to the kingdom of growth and prosperity, as a lot of people have been telling us in recent years," Representative Byron Dorgan, the populist former North Dakota state tax commissioner who will finally get his seat on the House Ways and Means Committee in the next session of Congress, has observed. "There is not, on one side, the tax laws, and on the other side, behavior. Those who assert that are asserting nonsense." (Mr. Dorgan's comments came in an illuminating symposium titled "Less Taxing Alternatives," sponsored by the Democracy Project and Citizens for Tax Justice. The text is available, for $7.50, from the Democracy Project, 145 East 49th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.)

The brutally Darwinian tax giveaways of the Reagan years and the deficit that resulted now provide an opportunity to rebuild a tax system that is both adequate and fair. Tax reform has always been a thankless cause. The constituencies for loopholes are ubiquitous; the constituency for fairness is ephemeral. Walter Mondale's task as candidate is to challenge not just the artifacts of Reaganomics but the broader ideology which disguises greed as economic necessity. And if by some chance Mr. Mondale is elected, he will have to exercise uncommon Presidential leadership to face down the Congressional predilection for tax expenditure. The markup session of any tax legislation to repeal major loopholes will be an olympics of special pleading.

IN MAKING his acceptance-speech pledge to raise taxes, Mr. Mondale sought—and got—credit for "boldness." But "boldness" is no substitute for boldness, and

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Mr. Mondale has yet to show he is prepared to stay the course. If he isn't, he should stick with cowardice, like his rival the incumbent.

Mr. Mondale's "bold" promise to raise taxes was, in fact, artfully ambiguous: the President, said the former Vice President, "will sock it to average-income families again, and he'll leave his rich friends alone. And I won't stand for it." Very well, but what would Mr. Mondale actually do? His statement can be interpreted in two ways. Either (a) he will sock it to the rich and leave average people alone, or (b) he will sock it to both to the rich and to average people. If he meant (a), then his assertion that this constitutes "my plan to cut the deficit" by two thirds is bluster. You can't make a serious dent in the deficit by taxing only the rich. Nor is there much political boldness in promising to raise taxes only on rich people. The only logical interpretation is (b). Yet that opens him up to the charge that he is, well, planning to raise average people's taxes.

MR. MONDALE obviously intended to smoke out Mr. Reagan on the deficit issue, and to some extent he has succeeded. But he smoked himself out, too. Reeling from the inevitable counterattack, he has retreated to his pre-boldness position that any tax increases in a Mondale Administration "would hold the average American family harmless," and in fact wouldn't even touch anyone making less than $30,000 a year. His real targets, he suggests, are incomes over $100,000. It won't wash, because that's not where the money is. And Mr. Mondale risks ending up in the worst of all possible worlds. He could lose the editorial writers by seeming unwilling to face up to the deficit after all. He could lose the political analysts by turning out (once again) not to be "bold." And whatever he does, he'll surely get tarred by the Republicans as an old-fashioned "tax and spend" Democrat.

Mr. Reagan's obfuscations and evasions have been more successful. He began, at his press conference the week after Mr. Mondale's challenge, by saying that he had no plans to raise taxes—except that, well, he might. His advisers determined that this needed firming up. Mr. Reagan's latest formulation, as we went to press, was: "I will propose no increase in personal income taxes, and I will veto any tax bill that would raise personal income tax rates for working Americans or that would fail to make our tax system simpler or more fair." This clever construction leaves Mr. Reagan with loopholes for either a consumption tax or a Republican-style income-tax "reform" that would place a larger share of the tax burden on middle-class people even while lowering their tax rates.

Although Mr. Mondale has endorsed the general notion of cutting out loopholes and lowering tax rates, he has held back from explicitly endorsing Bradley-Gephart, fearing to offend the denizens of various loopholes. The Democratic Party platform is similarly evasive, thus fumbling an opportunity to make this sort of reform a Democratic issue. It is probably the only way to make a tax increase really digestible. The complexity of the present tax code and the suspicion that others are getting away with murder gripe people almost as much as the amount they have to pay.

Mr. Reagan may yet be backed into the corner of foreswearing any kind of tax increase, however prettily packaged. There are loud voices in the Republican Party insisting that prosperity alone will raise tax revenues enough to solve the deficit problem, along with some (unspecified) cuts in spending. After all, they say, the economy has been expanding at an annual rate of over 7 percent, and if this keeps up. . . . It's the free lunch, its hour come 'round at last. Unfortunately, however, this can't keep up. The growth so far in this recovery has come from putting idle people and factories back to work. That's the relatively easy part. As the economy reaches full capacity, it can only grow through new investment and technological advance—a much slower process.

Nothing threatens that process more than the deficit, and nothing either candidate has said has brought us any nearer to closing the deficit. Mr. Reagan's massive fiscal shell game—his "tax cut" program that was really a massive transfer of wealth from the poor, the middle class, and the future to the well-off—created the present dilemma. Mr. Mondale, in his acceptance speech, shined a light in the direction of the only possible solution; but then, frightened by the glare, he ran for cover. He needs to come out again, and soon.

ARMED FARCES

Futile as it may be to decry hypocrisy in an election season, we feel obliged to comment on what is shaping up as the major national defense issue (apart from nuclear arms control) of the coming election, an issue that could easily be the occasion for the breaking of all existing American, if not world, records for bipartisan dissimulation: military readiness. The current flurry of activity centers around the report of an investigative committee of the House Appropriations Committee. It charges that readiness has declined since the Reagan Administration took office. Among its conclusions: the Army "cannot not be sustained in combat for any extended period of time"; in a war, the Navy couldn't operate full tilt for more than a week; navies of Soviet allies and Third World countries could inflict a "national disgrace" on the U.S. Navy; and the armed forces are not prepared to fight more than a single small war anywhere in the world at any one time.

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who disputed the conclusions, not the facts, of the report, branded it not only wrong but "dangerous," meaning that disclosing the lack of combat-readiness of American forces endangers America's military position in the world. That charge would carry a little more weight if Mr. Weinberger and other defense conservatives had not made spreading the

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word about American weakness (and the resulting "present danger") one of their principal activities during the late 1970s. When a Democratic Administration was in power, it complained that these charges were endangering the country and undermining confidence abroad. Conservatives replied, predictably and we think correctly, that in these matters candor is indispensable, that to pretend to be strong when one is weak is to build foreign policy on illusion and to invite even greater danger. Now that the Republicans are in power, the arguments are identical, only the actors have exchanged lines.

Mr. Weinberger's response is lame. It leads to the question: What has the Defense Department been doing with the huge appropriations it won in the last three Congresses? The Republicans, supposedly so suspicious of government's ability to spend money wisely, seem to think that in defense (and nowhere else) throwing money at a problem is tantamount to solving it. In addition, President Reagan apparently decided to gamble: to invest on expanding and modernizing the armed forces, at the expense of readiness. If one is trying rapidly to expand the Navy, for example, one can anticipate that training and manpower will suffer. If one is trying to introduce new weapons into the Air Force and Army, one can expect shortages of spare parts and malfunctions in the new high-tech weapons. Denying that such choices have been made does not make for enlightened debate on their wisdom.

Republicans are not the only ones who prefer to obfuscate the real choices this country faces in its defense investments. The Democrats don't denounce defense spending with quite the *brio* they used to; now they are more apt to talk about the need for a "strong but lean" defense (when they've gotten through endorsing hard work and family values). Still, their professions of shock over shortages of manpower, training, spare parts, and other readiness items rings a little false. It is strange to find a party so openly committed to fighting no wars (it reflexively opposes any projection, even the most modest, of American military power from Grenada—pre-polls—to Nicaragua to El Salvador to Lebanon) so concerned about American capacity to fight two wars at once. Like the Catholic bishops who have decided that we may possess nuclear weapons but must declare that we will never use them, the Democrats evidently have a taste for paradox. But at least the bishops don't pretend to be scandalized by the lack of fighting fitness of the MX.

SOME PARTS of the House Appropriations report so vociferously endorsed by Democrats read curiously when juxtaposed with other Democratic positions. For example, the report says that "although numerous intelligence analyses ascribe a high probability to the early use of chemical warfare by the Warsaw Pact, the readiness of chemical units is low in all areas." For months Mr. Mondale lambasted John Glenn for lack of purity on the "poison nerve gas" issue (Senator Glenn voted for building deterrent binary chemical weapons). Will the party's designee talk to us now about the "high probability" of "the early use of chemical warfare by the Warsaw Pact"?

The pity is that underlying all this hypocrisy there is a real issue: how to balance modernization vs. readiness. The choice is between rapid expansion of the military and then filling in the blanks, so to speak, later, versus a more conservative policy of building up stocks first, deferring modernization, and going with existing technology into the '90s, readier but not quite as advanced as we might be.

There is no obvious answer to this dilemma, one of the legacies of a decade's neglect of the military. But it surely won't be solved, or even illuminated, by election-year posturing over readiness.

DAMBUSTERS

President Reagan's answer to Walter Mondale's challenge about raising taxes is that he's not even going to think about raising taxes while there's still so much flab to be cut from the federal budget. In his press conference a few days after the Democratic convention, he referred once again to the 2,478—count 'em—recommendations of the Grace Commission, otherwise known as the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control. Why, there are billions to be saved, Mr. Reagan said, "by simply turning to modern business practices in all of these different ways instead of sticking with some old-time government practices that are way behind the times."

One of the Grace Commission's most sensible and obvious suggestions was that the government should sell the electricity generated by its dams at market rates, instead of at rock-bottom prices. Yet exactly a week after the President spoke, the Republican-controlled Senate, with White House support, passed a bill requiring the government to continue selling electricity from the Hoover Dam at less than a tenth of what it's worth until the year 2017.

The loss to the government will be billions of dollars. The beneficiaries will be people and businesses in areas of California, Nevada, and Arizona that happened to sign a contract for power from the Hoover Dam when it was built in 1937. The price at that time—before inflation, before OPEC, before the West emerged as a prosperous and self-sufficient region—was half a cent a kilowatt. The price today, when the average consumer pays 6.5 cents a kilowatt, is half a cent a kilowatt. The price in 2017 will still be half a cent a kilowatt. "How absurd can you get?" said Senator Howard Metzenbaum, whose one-man filibuster was cut off by a cloture vote in order to get the bill through.

Senator Metzenbaum is regarded by many colleagues of all political stripes as a major impediment to the smooth flow of public business. There was a fine bipartisan spirit displayed in the vote to shut him up and get on with the giveaway. Liberal Democrats Cranston and Kennedy joined conservative Republicans Goldwater and Laxalt. Conservative Democrat Hollings joined liberal Republican Weicker. A good time was had by all. The

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Democratic House has already passed the bill.

And who says Congress can't move fast or plan ahead instead of waiting until problems reach a crisis? The original fifty-year contract for electricity from the Hoover Dam doesn't even run out until 1987, yet this thirty-year extension has been passed three years ahead of time without so much as a single hearing. Now that the precedent has been set, users of electricity from later federal dams can expect even more efficient service when their contracts run out, and many more billions will melt away.

One beneficiary of this particular welfare program happens to be Senator Goldwater himself, whose local power authority gets a small fraction of its electricity from the Hoover Dam. Goldwater drove the issue home in a dramatic speech reminiscent of Senator Paula Hawkins's recent revelation that she had been the victim of child abuse. "I have a four-bedroom house," Goldwater told his colleagues July 30. "Yes, it is air-conditioned. But my last month's bill was almost $500 for electricity to run that house." Now, in all fairness, how can you ask a man with a house so large that air conditioning it costs $500 a month to pay the same price everyone else has to pay for electricity?

The Hoover Dam giveaway violates just about every principle of government you will hear enunciated by politicians of either party between now and November. Republicans talk about putting the government on a sound business footing, and about letting free market forces solve our energy problems; then they vote to perpetuate what Mr. Reagan calls "old-time government practices" that will encourage waste of energy by suppressing the free market. Democrats complain about favors for the wealthy, and dream up elaborate rescue schemes for the industrial Midwest; then they vote to extend a favor to wealthy western states that gives them an unfair competitive advantage over the rest of the country in attracting industry. Politicians of both parties declare their horror of the deficit, their loathing of "special interests," and their fealty to principles of fiscal responsibility; then they lack the backbone to resist the most absurd special-interest boondoggle.

THE HOOVER DAM is just one example. Every day's paper brings new ones. It took less than a week from the moment President Reagan proposed it (in the same news conference where he swore to cut spending rather than increase taxes) for Congress to send back to him an utterly pointless little pre-election increase in Social Security payments, subverting the painfully negotiated reform of last year and undermining the faith of any rational person under, say, 50, that the system will survive until he or she needs it. When word came out last week that a man with thirteen farms in three different states got a deeply subsidized $400,000 loan from the Farmers Home Administration, much hay was made of the fact that he is a business partner of Agriculture Secretary John Block; no politician was heard to ask why anyone who owns thirteen different farms in three states deserves taxpayer-subsidized loans at all.

Why do we even bother to listen to them?

GRANDSTAND PLAY

President Reagan is buying indulgences from the fundamentalists in his party. Hence the new White House hostility to international family planning programs. For twenty years the U.S. government has contributed to such programs; since the early 1970s, strict Congressional provisions have prohibited the use of those contributions for abortion, and for the promotion of abortion, or for coercive contraceptive measures such as involuntary sterilization. But the new U.S. policy—one of more than a hundred proposals being presented at this week's U.N. international conference on population in Mexico City—goes beyond these restrictions. It puts any program that promotes safe abortions to women who want them in the same category as programs of mandatory sterilization. Having made this specious equation, the Administration proposes to use it to justify cutting off any family planning program that uses private funds for abortion services of any kind. All this has less to do with the Mexico City conference than with the Dallas convention, where foes of legalized abortion threaten trouble if they are not appeased. The result is an international abortion policy whose effects would be as cruel as they would be counterproductive.

How would the policy hurt population control efforts? Currently the United States contributes $240 million a year to the Agency for International Development for population programs. A.I.D., in turn, distributes the money to a variety of public and private agencies that have family planning affiliates around the world. For example, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (I.P.P.F.), a private organization headquartered in London, has member associations in more than one hundred countries and receives about $11 million—a quarter of its budget—from A.I.D. That money, in accordance with federal regulations, is used only for family planning education programs and services unrelated to abortion. Such private organizations—and there are many of them—have long been recognized as essential to any strategy aimed at lowering the world's birth rate, which at current levels will produce a world population of nearly 10 billion people by 2025. By preventing unwanted pregnancies and helping women space their births, these programs dramatically decrease maternal and infant mortality—and, incidentally, cut the demand for abortions. That's a result the White House ought to welcome. Instead, the new policy is to deny organizations like I.P.P.F. public money to be used to help women avoid pregnancy in the first place because those organizations also raise private money for abortion services. In I.P.P.F.'s case, "abortion money" accounts for less than 1 percent of the organization's budget. If the private organizations stick to their principled determination to help make safe abortions available, they could be obliged to forgo up to $100 million a year. The Administration says it would redirect the money, probably to foreign governments. But since many of these allow abortion on a large

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scale, it's hard to see what the Adminstration accomplishes—except to strengthen government agencies at the expense of private ones, an ironic fate for an Administration supposedly dedicated to private voluntary action.

Part of the background to the Administration's global grandstanding on abortion is its boosterish faith in Third World economic growth as the real solution to overpopulation. That faith is misplaced. Increased productivity in the long run does indeed contribute to leveling out populations—as in South Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore—by creating conditions in which large families become less important to individual economic survival. But the free market approach isn't about to work wonders anytime soon in many impoverished areas of the world. Nor does it take into account the strain put on developing nations by the twentieth century's unprecedented explosion in birth rates. Global prospects for both stability and growth in the long run will be dangerously diminished if birth rates in the short run are not brought under control.

Real life experience shows that voluntary government and private assistance in family planning enables people to make free choices about family size, and that when couples have access to education and contraceptives they often choose to have smaller families. Senators Bill Bradley and Bob Packwood have drafted a resolution instructing the President to allow population funding to continue as before. We hope it passes.

NOTEBOOK

□ A COUPLE OF WEEKS ago Stefan Kanfer reminded our readers of the right-wing fellow-traveling origins of Diana Vreeland. This week we have the sadder task of recalling the similar sin of a much more formidable figure in our literature. It has not been observed by any of the reviewers of Barbara Pym's *A Very Private Eye, An Autobiography in Diaries and Letters* that its chapters of her youth are disfigured by an immature enthusiasm for the German things of Hitler's Germany. "I thought he looked smooth and clean," she writes of Hitler in Hamburg in September 1934, "and was very impressed." in 1938 "Miss Pym," as she calls herself, observes in a letter that she misses "Deutschland," that "she is receiving letters from her so dear friend in Dresden, and he is saying that it is *Schade* that she is not in Germany to experience these so great events that have shaken the heart of Germany." She practices her German by reading passages of the *Volkische Beobachter*, Julius Streicher's repulsive anti-Semitic sheet. She even sings the Horst Wessel song, the Nazi anthem, along with "The St. Louis Blues" (thereby betraying a total contempt for blacks, too). A silly undergraduate's lack of judgment? Maybe; she writes of attending pacifists' meetings as well. Still, given her reputation as the last in a great series of homely British women writers, and given the moral prestige that has been conferred upon her proud provincialism, it is worth noting that her judgment began badly. In this respect, at least, she was homely indeed.

□ GARBLED TRANSMISSIONS gave rise to garbled details in "Made In Minnesota," by Sidney Blumenthal (TNR, August 6). Minnesota Governor Karl Rolvaag did not win the 1966 party endorsement and then lose the primary; rather, he lost the endorsement and won the primary. Walter Mondale was not Orville Freeman's campaign manager for governor in 1950 but in 1956. Finally, even though 1968 was a big year for psychedelics the piece should not have said that Robert Kennedy's campaign that year "included the highest voters and some of the lowest." Make that "notes," not "voters."

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Bowing before what seemed to be the prevailing winds, the Girl Scouts of America not long ago renamed their merit badge awarded for proficiency in such matters as U.S. relations with the rest of the world: 'One World' became 'My World.' Nevertheless the Illinois Department of the American Legion 'roared' its approval of a resolution denouncing the Girl Scouts and withdrawing the Legion's support of the organization until it rid its Handbook of implications that 'the United Nations and one-world citizenship' might take precedence over U.S. citizenship. The same convention turned down a resolution suggesting that all Legionnaires study the Communist Manifesto after an opposing delegate explained that the Manifesto was 'too difficult reading.' In Washington, the dog days of August were celebrated by debate on Capitol Hill over an invasion of un-American trout. Seems that the minuscule American industry devoted to the raising of trout for the gourmet trade was beset with competition from such fish-wise nations as Norway. After more debate than it frequently permits on bills of major importance, the House agreed that un-American trout would have to be so labeled on menus. The Senate version, however, calls only for restaurants serving un-American trout to hang a sign on the wall so declaring." ("This Is Very Mid-Summer Madness," The Editors, August 23, 1954.)

From 'Penthouse' to the White House.

SEXUAL FOREBODING

IT HAS been a summer of vague sexual foreboding and unnameable fears. Before San Francisco, the media brooded darkly over whether the proximity of Castro Street would sully the proceedings in Moscone Center. As soon as it appeared that the delegates would survive the convention without an outbreak of AIDS, and that the Democrats, propelled by the nomination of Geraldine

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Ferraro, might even have a shot at winning, new anxieties set in: What if Fritz and Gerry *touched*? Would they appear to be a couple? What if they were referred to as "running *mates*"? Then, like a release valve for the collective libido, came the *Penthouse* pictures of Miss America, not only nude but also lewdly engaged with another young woman. The nation had a witch to burn, and gathered around the television sets to enjoy the purifying ritual.

For days, lumpen words like "wholesome," "moral," and "standards" hung over the land. Vanessa Williams, who bore, in addition to everything else, the historical burden of being the first black Miss America, tried the classic defenses: She had been misled by bad men; indeed, the worst of them, photographer Tom Chiapel, was fat—a sure sign of turpitude in a nation where good men would rather die jogging than live in obesity. Further, she had not enjoyed it: "Each pose was 'set up,' " she told the press. "At no time was there any spontaneous or ongoing activity. . . ." But her tearless demeanor, noted by all the media, gave her away, and white men with varying stakes in the ambient prurience of American culture rose solemnly to pass judgment. Spokesmen for the Miss America contest made reference to "the spirit of the pageant" and the "dignity of the crown." Even *Penthouse*'s Bob Guccione, the most obvious beneficiary of Miss Williams's lapse, assumed the pulpit to intone, maliciously, "She committed a fraud on the pageant. . . . If she had not accepted the title then someone who was much more deserving—who had nothing to hide—might have been Miss America in her place."

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the hazy news overlap between the Democratic convention and the Miss America denouement, many viewers began to wonder, dimly, whether Geraldine Ferraro had any funny pictures in her past and whether Suzette Charles, the new Miss America, knew anything about foreign policy. Although no commentator remarked upon it, there are similarities between the pageant and the convention. Both preempt prime time. Both gather delegations from the fifty states (and it could be argued that the pageant—with its system of points for beauty, talent, and charm—has the more rational selection process). Both faced disruption in 1968: the Democrats from anti-war protestors and the Chicago police, the pageant from feminists protesting the "objectification" of the contestants and of American women in general, and thereby calling attention to the thick scum of mundane sexism that coats the entire culture. It was this latter demonstration that inspired the epithet "bra-burners" (though no charred remains were ever found) and helped launch the mass, activist phase of the women's movement which was validated so stunningly with Ferraro's nomination.

So, with Hegelian hindsight, one could have seen the two events—the convention and the pageant—coming at each other for at least the past sixteen years. But no one could have foreseen that they would collide, as they did in the third week of July, in such a rainbow coalition of issues: race, gender, and sexual preference, not to mention pornography and commercial exploitation. Commentators, fresh from straining to detect the beef, or, failing that, the mayo, in the Democratic Party platform, now applied their political sensibilities to Miss Williams's case.

No one denied that she had served her term honorably, balancing her liberal views on abortion, E.R.A., and civil rights with judicious visits to the troops in Lebanon and to the President in the White House. On the strength of her record, she might even have been allowed to retain her crown. But then the pictures themselves hit the newsstands, and the accusatory adjective "explicit," usually delivered as an abruptly closed hiss, began to dominate the talk shows. The centrist national position, offered

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up by *USA Today*, took its cue from the Democrats by mixing compassion with a law-and-order theme. Miss Williams should be forgiven, Mary Magdalene-style, but she must step down, for "a pageant which assigns full-time chaperones to protect its winners against any hint of sexual impropriety could never tolerate this."

AFTER THAT came a parade of special interests, as social groupings which do not contain Charles Manatt are called, each claiming Miss Williams as a martyr to its cause. Benjamin Hooks of the N.A.A.C.P. charged that Miss Williams was the victim of a racist "double standard"—an interesting claim, but one supported so far only by the fact that Miss Williams's white partner in pornography, who, as far as anyone knows, is not even Miss Rhode Island, has gotten off scot-free. Susan Brownmiller, representing feminism on ABC's "Nightline," claimed Miss Williams as a victim of pornography, the "purpose and intent" of which is "to destroy women's lives." Unfortunately, this put her in the awkward position of having to argue that Miss Williams's life had indeed been destroyed, and that things could not have gone otherwise. "The pageant had no recourse but to let her go," she said, adding that the sponsors "have a great stake in the continued legitimacy of the swimsuit competition, of pulchritude on parade, and also the decency of the pageant." Even the left, still wincing from the sonorous flag-and-family themes sounded at the convention, appropriated the fallen woman. "Family values," editorialized *The Nation*, "have claimed another victim in Vanessa Williams."

So quickly do media circuses come and go that other important constituencies and parties to the case may never have their say. The Military-Industrial Complex, for example, and its foes. Among the four corporate sponsors of the Miss America Pageant is Beatrice Foods, the mega-conglomerate that makes Samsonite Luggage, Tropicana, Fisher Nuts, La Choy, and Swiss Miss. No one has yet pointed out that in May, eight months after the last coronation, Beatrice acquired Esmark, Inc., which in turn owns Avis, Swift, Playtex undergarments, and Wellman Dynamics—the last being the manufacturer of the outer bodies of cruise missiles. Would it be going too far to say that Miss Williams, all unknowing, was sponsored by cruise missiles for the last three months of her reign, and to call on Dr. Helen Caldicott to suggest where the real obscenity of the case may lie?

More seriously, given the sexual anxieties roused by the Democratic convention, no one has come forth from the sexology profession, from the lesbian community, or from what is known to insiders as the "pro-sex" wing of the women's movement to offer an exegesis of the photos themselves. Despite their nasty venue in the pages of Guccione's magazine, they are a daintily posed series, suitable for illustrating *The Joy of Lesbian Sex* if it were to be written by the authors of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Nothing occurs in them that would be foreign to a reader of Lonnie Barbach, Ph.D., or Dr. Ruth Westheimer, either of whom could testify that even in the most indiscreet shot of Miss Williams, only outer labia are revealed—establishing, for what it is worth, that there are still limits.

Nor has there been a peep from the advocates of untrammeled free enterprise, who normally have so much to say as elections approach. The entrepreneurial community should want to recognize Tom Chiapel for his foresight and patience in taking pictures of naked young ladies not for any immediate gain or prurient satisfaction, but in the hope that one of his models would eventually become a bank president, an ambassador, or Miss America. The economy would no doubt be in better shape if our larger capitalists showed a similar willingness to defer short-term profits for long-term productive investment.

Finally, the whole story may have a happy ending if the public relations community gets a hearing. Larry Goldman, president of the P.R. firm Rosenfield Goldman Inc., has proposed that Miss Williams drop out of sight and refrain from selling her story to just any eager biographer. Then, proposes Michael Levine—whose Los Angeles firm represents, among other clients, Debra Sue Maffett, Miss America 1983—Miss Williams should wait until "after the controversy has evaporated a little. And she should give one large interview, and television should be the forum, where the choke in her voice or the tear in her eye can be expressed."

May Miss Williams make a rapid rebound and achieve sufficient fame and confidence to declare that the photos—or at least the scenes depicted—were hardly worth the fuss. In fact, the real spectacle of the summer has been the men, well-heeled white men such as Guccione and the pageant officials pontificating on "wholesomeness" and "decency" while their anonymous brothers were mobbing the newsstands and pawing their *Penthouses*.

For the only real connection between the two events of July—the nomination of Ms. Ferraro in San Francisco and the impeachment of Miss America in New York—lies in the sleazy subconscious of American manhood. Only minutes after Ferraro's selection, the first "Tits and Fritz" buttons went on sale. And, sinking still lower, jokes have been circulated about this being the "first election in history with a bush on each ticket." Ed Rollins, the President's campaign manager, let it all hang out when he told the press, "Geraldine Ferraro will be the biggest political bust in history"—followed, insightfully, with "Oops, that was a Freudian slip." November will provide an exacting test of male maturity. For now, it appears that whether a woman wears a one-piece swimsuit and sash or a skirted suit and pearls, the boys see only tits and ass.

BARBARA EHRENREICH & JANE O'REILLY

Barbara Ehrenreich is the author of *The Hearts of Men* (Doubleday). Jane O'Reilly is the author of *The Girl I Left Behind* (Macmillan).

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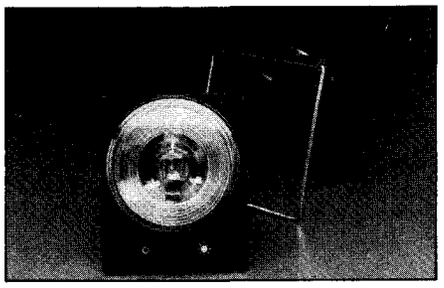

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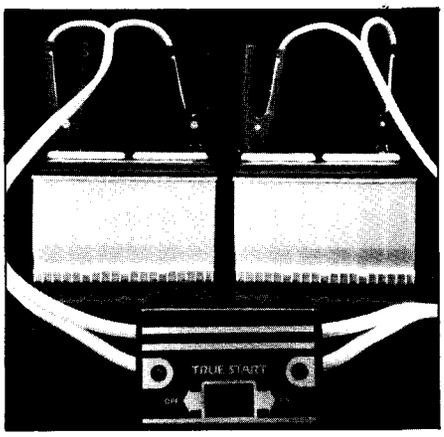

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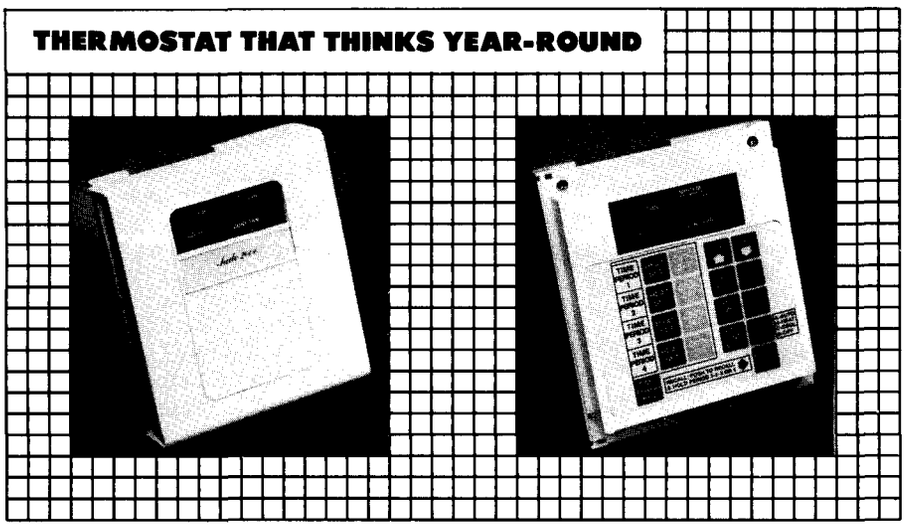

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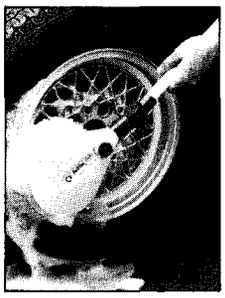
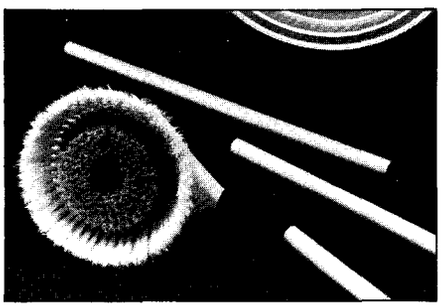


The Swirlon Rotary Scrubber turns an ordinary garden hose into an automatic cleaning machine. Water pressure spins the 5″ inner brush for highspeed active cleaning while the 8″ stationary outer brush contains the spray and sweeps away the loosened dirt. Brushhead adjusts to any of six angles for best cleaning and contains soap reservoir for automatic sudsing and handy thumb-operated flow control valve. Two 24″ extensions provide a total reach of 70″ — ideal for washing soffits or siding on the house. Makes short work of cleaning garbage cans, lawn furniture, windows, patios and porches. The Swirlon Rotary Cleaning Brush Set costs **$32.00** ($3.95) #A1135.



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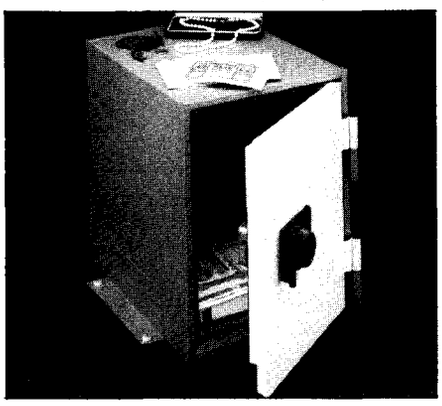
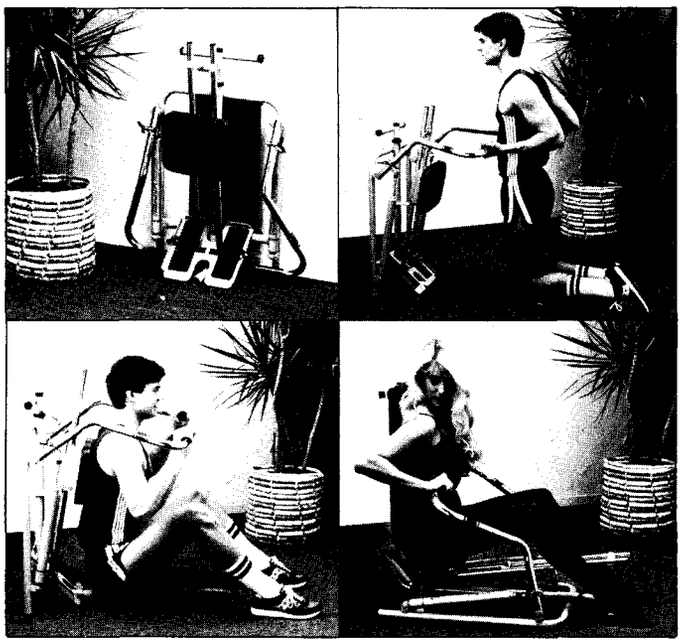
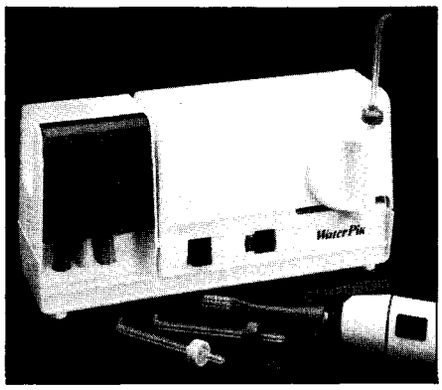


ROWING PLUS



In less than two years, rowing has caught on as one of the most popular forms of home exercise — with good reason. It provides rhythmic aerobic exercise without the space needs of jogging or cycling. It exercises arms, chest, back, shoulders, legs and midriff at the same time — all the body's large muscles. It is private. It gives a complete workout faster than almost any other form of exercise. Now Vitamaster has taken a top-grade hydraulic home rowing machine and added a few clever refinements that turn it into a multi-action home gym. The MA-500 enables you to do shoulder presses, curls, bench presses, squats, arm extensions — all in addition to rowing. The result is a versatile economical exercise machine that meets the needs of the whole family. Tension settings are variable. One-twist height adjustment. Fold-up storage requires only 10″ depth. The MA-500 costs **$169.00** ($18.95) #A1251.

FAMILY DENTAL CENTER



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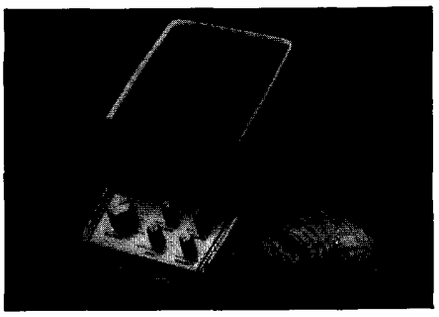
ZONE OF CALM



Noise produces stress in the human organism. Today the volume of civilization nearly everywhere seriously interferes with our abilities to relax, read, sleep, concentrate or otherwise function at optimum efficiency. But you needn't be victimized by noise pollution. The Marsona Sound Conditioner electronically synthesizes a variety of pleasing natural sounds that help mask out and reduce the annoyance of unwanted noise. You can simulate the sounds of ocean surf, summer rain, mountain waterfalls. You control not only the volume but also wave pattern, wave or rain rhythm, the seeming nearness or distance of the source. The Marsona is the finest instrument of its kind on the market, solid-state electronics designed for continuous use (electrical draw only 5 watts). UL-listed, **$139.00** ($6.95) #A1161.

UL LIGHT BUTTON

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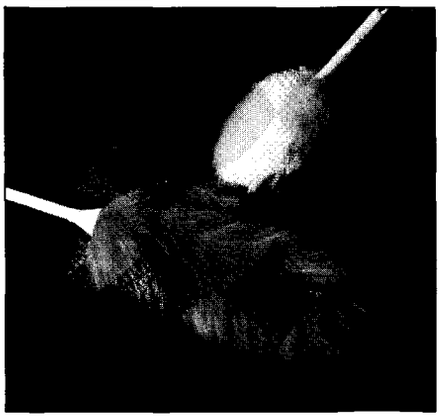
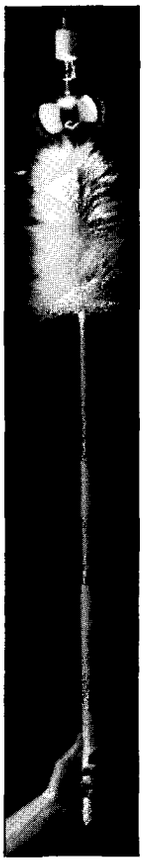
DUST MAGNETS™



Tools for Living has introduced tens of thousands of people to the delights of lambswool dusting in the past two years. Lambswool puts the feather duster to shame by making dust literally leap off surfaces where it has accumulated. This magnetic attraction is just the thing for dusting bric-a-brac, china, crystal, pictures and other fragile items. Our dusters are imported from New Zealand where climate conditions produce the highest quality lambswool in the world! Our all-time favorite, the standard 27" long duster costs only **$7.00** ($1.95) #A780. Our newest find is a telescoping duster that extends to more than 4 feet! This *Tools for Living exclusive* is made with an extra heavy handle and collapses to 28" for easy storage. **$12.00** ($1.95) #A1057. Buy both the standard and telescoping duster for the remarkable low price of **$19.00** ($1.95) #A1058 and we'll give you a bonus mini duster ($4.50 value) FREE!



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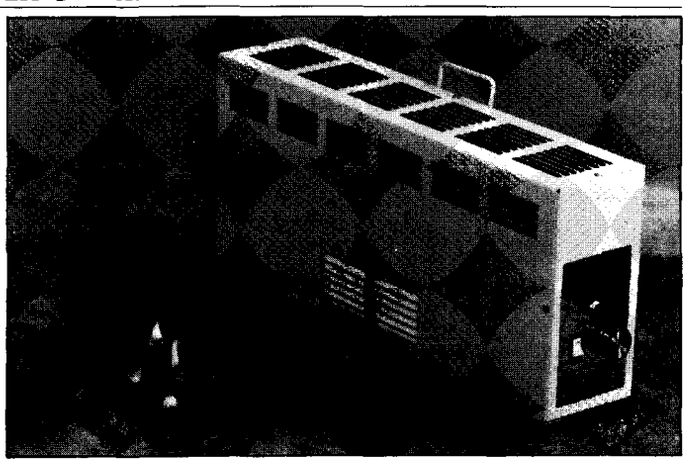
QUICKER HEATER-UPPER



Are you ready for the cold bathroom and bedroom floors that await you this fall and winter? The chilliness that creeps up on you when the thermostat is turned down? The new Porta-A-Steam heater uses a maintenance-free sealed steam system to get heat flowing where you need it in just 3 minutes. Draws only 1000 watts (compared to 1500 for oil-filled radiators and hot-wire heaters) yet provides room temperatures as high as 80°. Sturdy steel casing remains touchable at all times — no fear of burns or fires. Eminently portable, weighs only 12 lbs., measures 22" x 10" x 4¼". Adjustable thermostat control, continuous fan operation to circulate warm air, safety cutoffs, 1-year warranty. Porta-A-Steam is the sensible supplemental heating alternative. **$79.00** ($10.95) #A1226 each. UL-approved. Ideal around children or pets.

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Burning the scandal at both ends.

MEESE MESS

SCANDALS MAKE good copy and sometimes make journalistic careers, but do they make for good government? The case of Ed Meese shows the press in a less than flattering light, diligently hunting down all the leads that might show malfeasance in high places but often exaggerating the significance of what has been discovered, and leaving one in the end with the disturbing thought that the whole "affair" will prove to be one more blow to reasonableness.

My favorite contemporary author, the Swiss Friedrich Durrenmatt, provided the best perspective on scandal in his novel *Traps*, later a Broadway play entitled *The Deadly Game*. The theme, as in all his works, was justice: What is guilt, and who can judge it? In *Traps*, a nondescript person wanders through a winter blizzard into a chalet to find three old men having their monthly dinner together: a retired judge, a retired prosecutor, and a retired defense attorney. The three try the greatest cases of history, but, as one of them explains to Traps, it's more fun with a real person, and they ask if he will stand trial in exchange for food and drink. He agrees, but when his attorney suggests he plead guilty to a minor charge ("everyone has done something wrong, after all"), Traps insists that he has lived an exemplary life and claims innocence. In the end, the prosecutor finds that Traps, having discovered his wife involved in an affair with his boss, arranges for the man—who has a heart condition—to undergo a shock, which kills him. "You knew he would die," the prosecutor proclaims enthusiastically. "Yes," says Traps, who is promptly sentenced to death by the judge. Taking matters into his own hands, Traps hangs himself, and when the three old men—now happily drunk—find his body, they lament, "Traps, Traps, why did you do that? You have ruined the most wonderful evening we ever had."

As Durrenmatt realized, no one's life can withstand intense scrutiny. We have all done something we regret, or failed to do something we should have done, and a canny prosecutor in a courtroom or in the media can eventually ask enough damaging questions to make us look bad. In practice, once the life of a public figure comes under the microscope, he is in trouble. One hopes that the issue is one of degree, and that we are entitled to be judged by standards of reasonableness. Are our sins grave or only the usual ones?

In the Meese affair, the protagonist's major malfeasance seems to have been that he borrowed money. His other alleged sins, for the most part, are those that define the political process and the spoils system: he got people he knew appointed to jobs; he rewarded party loyalists and Reagan supporters; he did his best to rally public and Congressional backing for his President's programs.

Yet even though there is virtually unanimous testimony from those who know him best that Meese is an honest and scrupulous man, the media have investigated his activities without the kind of fairness we so badly need to keep society civil. THE NEW REPUBLIC, for one, used a nasty cover headline—SLEAZY ED MEESE—to highlight a TRB column about the case (TNR, April 2). Consider two other examples. The first came on April 4, when Ronald J. Ostrow of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote a story (picked up by *The Washington Post*) with this lead paragraph:

> Clarence M. Pendleton Jr., chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, won appointment to his federal job while serving on the board of Great American Federal Savings & Loan Association, the San Diego institution that allowed Attorney General-designate Edwin Meese III to fall fifteen months behind on his mortgage payments.

After noting that Pendleton was the third former official of the S&L to get a job in the Reagan Administration, Ostrow leveled his charge against Meese in the form of a question: "In an interview, Pendleton said he had no knowledge of Meese's mortgage debt . . . or of Great American's apparently unusually tolerant attitude. . . ." The insinuation here is that the bank let Meese off easy because the bank's officials wanted (and got) jobs in Washington, or, alternatively, that bank officials helped Meese and he rewarded them later on by getting them Washington jobs.

Meese and Pendleton were old friends, Pendleton having served on the board of the San Diego Coalition for Economic and Environmental Balance—co-founded by Meese—in the late 1970s. Thus Pendleton was already in the basic pool of people from whom the Reagan Administration chose many of its officials. Furthermore, as Ostrow's own information demonstrates, the dates of Pendleton's association with the bank don't support the suggestion that he was instrumental in the Meese loans. Pendleton came to the bank in January 1981 (by which time the Meeses were trying to sell their house) and left in November. Ostrow himself observes that Meese's mortgage debt ". . . climbed to $423,000 in April, 1982," by which time Pendleton had been gone for five months and was hardly in a position to influence anything. In any event, the bank's willingness to let Meese delay payments until the house was sold is hardly surprising; California real estate is not a bad risk, Meese was gainfully employed, and his future earning prospects were excellent. Meese says that he didn't even know Pendleton was on the board, and nothing in print suggests the contrary.

HAD THE media been of a fairer turn of mind, they might have reported that the stories of Meese and his California home reflected the man's real condition: Meese had to borrow money, tried to sell his house during a tough time for the real estate market, and got some help during that period from—imagine!—his friends.

The other main sin of which Meese has been accused is more interesting, because it is related to the post-Watergate effort to eliminate venality from government. As usual, the procedures were designed by the lawyers, who created

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complicated forms for government officials to fill out. It was Meese's failure to completely fill out one of these forms that led to one of the most outrageous headlines in the whole affair, in the *The Washington Post* on April 6: MEESE FAILED TO LIST PAID TRIPS. The clear suggestion of the headline—and much of the story—was that Meese was cheating; in fact he had run afoul of some tough paperwork. The new ethics laws require you to report almost everything you do and have done, including everything you own, all jobs you have ever held, any company with which you have had a relationship, any board on which you have sat, and so on. I know of one older government official who has done a lot in his life who had to pay a lawyer and an accountant for thirty days' work in order to fill out the forms in full.

THE ORDEAL by form does not end there, however, for if you travel while a government official, you have to report that, too, and it is very difficult to deduce from the laws *how* to report it all. If a group asks you to speak and offers to pay for the cost of your travel and lodging, there are two possibilities: you can pay the expenses and ask for reimbursement, or you can ask for the tickets, the hotel bills, and the meals to be paid directly for you. If I have understood the requirements properly, the first case is termed "reimbursement" and goes on one form, while the second is a "gift" and goes on a different form. Moreover, the government's lawyers were in a quandary for the first couple of years about how to report all these things, and even about *whether* they all had to be reported.

This aspect of the Meese story offered the media the chance to look into the Ethics in Government Act and ask some intelligent questions about it, but to my knowledge no publication or network did so. Yet as John H. Gross, who investigated the Carter family business for the Justice Department in 1979, wrote in the *New York Law Journal* back in January 1982:

> . . . the Act does not effectively deal with the problem it was intended to address. In fact, its chief effect has been to deflect public inquiry from genuine improprieties of those in high office and focus public interest instead on errors which those officials commit in preparing their disclosure reports.
>
> This is essentially a misplaced focus because most such errors are nothing more than honest mistakes. Not only do the Act and its regulations call for elaborate detail, but they do so in a terribly confusing manner. . . . A government official without specialized training in the requirements of the Act is likely to be mystified by the task before him. Mistakes are almost unavoidable.
>
> Such mistakes seem to hold an interest for "public interest" groups and the media well beyond their intrinsic importance. . . .

Meese didn't want to spend the money on a lawyer, and filled out the forms himself. On one occasion he omitted a $15,000 loan to his wife from a California friend who later got a government job (he had declared the loan on other forms), and this got him into hot water. Just as John Gross had predicted, an innocent error became characterized as malfeasance.

In *Traps*, the old men's game becomes deadly because Traps makes a claim of absolute innocence that cannot possibly stand close investigation, and he forgets that he is involved in a game and acts as if his mock trial and sentencing were real. The judge and the attorneys were shocked to see the effect of their amusement, for they had believed it was all a game. I sometimes think the media behave in the same way, and one of the tip-offs is the fact that almost without exception the major media have termed Jacob Stein the "special prosecutor" in the case. His actual title is "independent counsel" and the title was changed from "special prosecutor" in 1982 precisely because Congress decided that the latter was too prejudicial. Yet among leading publications only *The Wall Street Journal* has used the correct label with any frequency.

The Meese affair has produced hundreds of pages of articles and hours of broadcast time. This is disproportional to the significance of Meese's actions. It hurts Meese, an honest and capable official, and it makes it more difficult to recruit other good people for similar positions. In fact, for a day at the Democratic convention, some journalists noted that Geraldine Ferraro had not listed her husband's business activities on her disclosure form, and there was a brief flurry of investigative activity. Happily, it quieted down, but we shall soon witness her second ordeal by form. If we continue to subject our public officials to such unfair examinations, we shall end up with either inexperienced novitiates or experienced crooks in high office.

The government and the media must reach a reasonable compromise, whereby the media continue to scrutinize the activities of government officials but a sense of balance about improprieties is observed. The alternative is for political life to grow less and less civil.

MICHAEL LEDEEN

Michael Ledeen is Senior Fellow at the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The Burger Court's right-hand man.

WHITE'S FLIGHT

ON THE DAY after Independence Day the Supreme Court closed a term during which civil liberties took a worse shellacking than in any other year since Warren Burger became Chief Justice. Head-shaking observers claimed that the "Burger Court" or the "Nixon-Reagan Court" was finally showing its true colors. Court-watchers have been insisting for years that the liberal legacy of the Warren Court has been left surprisingly untouched, and that the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan appointees have caused

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less upheaval than had been expected. The 1983-84 record belies that proposition. The term ended with a number of rulings that significantly eroded constitutional protections against illegal searches and seizures. Other decisions during the year made substantial inroads into the famous *Miranda* safeguards established by the Warren Court for arrested suspects. Some cases cut back on First Amendment rights of free expression and freedom of religion. And the Court seemed more prepared than ever before in recent memory to read ambiguously worded federal laws as restricting, rather than expanding, individual rights.

IT IS GENERALLY assumed that the Justices appointed by recent Republican Presidents are responsible for the Court's regressive trend. This has been particularly true in this election year, when a staple of Democratic rhetoric is the question, "What will Reagan do to the Supreme Court?" Little public attention has been given, however, to the Justice whose vote was crucial in the most highly charged cases. He is the only Kennedy appointee left on the Supreme Court: Byron White.

The record of this past term justifies classifying White as the second most conservative Justice on the Court in criminal cases—exceeding even Sandra Day O'Connor, Reagan's only appointee. In two important criminal cases, White joined the Court's most conservative member, William Rehnquist, in a dissenting twosome from a liberal ruling that was acceptable even to Burger and O'Connor, as well as to the other Nixon-Ford appointees, Lewis Powell, Harry Blackmun, and John Paul Stevens. In many other areas, however, the Court has reflected White's views. He was forced to dissent, in whole or in part, in only 12 of the 150 full opinions issued by the Court. And he was chosen to write the Court's opinions in several of the most controversial cases, frequently throwing in language that bodes ill for civil liberties.

The most troubling rulings, which came on the last day of the term, put limits on the so-called "exclusionary rule," which seeks to encourage the authorities to be law-abiding by excluding unlawfully seized evidence from use in trials. The Court's new ruling allows such evidence to be used if it was taken in "reasonable, good-faith reliance" on a search warrant that was later found to be invalid. By a vote of 6 to 3, the Court decided that there were only "marginal or nonexistent benefits" in prohibiting use of evidence obtained by police officers who were acting in "objective good faith" under a warrant, and that the exclusionary rule should be modified to allow such evidence to be used in criminal trials even if it is ultimately established that there was inadequate basis for the warrant. The dissenters—Justices Brennan, Marshall, and Stevens—claimed that this was the culmination of a process of "gradual but determined strangulation" of the Fourth Amendment, converting the exclusionary rule into nothing more than "an unenforced honor code that the police may follow in their discretion."

Who wrote the majority opinion that did this damage? It was Byron White, known as a pragmatist from the days when he served in Robert Kennedy's Justice Department. While Deputy Attorney General under Robert Kennedy for fourteen months, White ran the day-to-day operations of the Department of Justice, making practical judgments each hour on sensitive issues of civil rights enforcement, criminal law priorities, and the selection of federal judges. He was not viewed as a legal theoretician or ideologue, but as the man who saw to it that things got done. One Supreme Court historian has said that he "proved to be an able administrator rather than a policy innovator."

During his first decade on the Supreme Court, White had little opportunity to make waves. He was not a member of the usual liberal majority in the concluding years of the Warren Court, and he did not, therefore, write any of the decisions for which the Warren Court has become famous. Nor was he a vigorous or vocal dissenter, such as Justice John Harlan or, in his last years, Justice Hugo Black. He and Justice Potter Stewart formed a middle-of-the-road bloc, which defied classification. As the Court turned more conservative, White increasingly spoke for majorities, although he was not seen as a full-fledged member of the Burger-Rehnquist wing. He became known more for careful lawyering and attention to procedural detail than for constitutional philosophy. In the exclusionary rule case, White said that the remedy of excluding evidence should be used only if it is a demonstrable deterrent to the conduct of police officers and prevents them from engaging in unconstitutional searches. This was not a new position for Justice White; he has been urging it in individual opinions since 1976. Now it has become the law of the land.

ANOTHER controversial constitutional case arose out of efforts by a Washington group called the Community for Creative Non-Violence to demonstrate the plight of the homeless by erecting tent cities on the Mall and in Lafayette Park, across from the White House. A 6-to-5 majority of the federal Court of Appeals ruled that the group's demonstration was protected by the First Amendment's guarantee of free expression, so that the National Park Service could not absolutely prohibit the sleep-in. The Supreme Court disagreed. Since speech could be limited by reasonable regulations as to "time, place and manner," the absolute prohibition against "camping" on the Mall—regardless of the motives of the campers—was said by the Court to be regulation based on "time, place and manner." The spokesman for the Court majority was not a Nixon, Ford, or Reagan appointee. It was Byron White.

White also wrote the Court's majority opinions in two nonconstitutional cases that have left civil libertarians shaken. In February he wrote the majority opinion in *Grove City College* v. *Bell*, in which the Court ruled that the clause of the Civil Rights Act that prohibits sex discrimination by institutions receiving federal funds applies only to the specific program receiving federal assistance, and not to the entire school. That means that under existing feder-

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al law a college may discriminate against women in all programs except those that directly benefit from federal funding.

Congress moved quickly to correct this judicial limitation, and the House has already passed, by an overwhelming vote of 372 to 32, a bill—grandly called the "Civil Rights Act of 1984"—that would effectively overrule the Supreme Court's understanding. The legislation has sixty-two Senate sponsors, but a filibuster is threatened in the upper chamber, and the bill has some powerful opponents. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, which initiated this legislative effort, attacked the *Grove City* ruling as the year's most serious setback to civil rights. White's opinion was the subject of particular criticism because the crucial part of it—the part that limited the civil rights remedy—was *obiter dictum*, an unasked-for ruling on an issue that White unnecessarily reached for and decided.

White's past record in the civil rights area has, by and large, been progressive. It is hard to believe that the Justice who went out of his way to narrow the civil rights remedy in the *Grove City* case is the same man who forcefully argued in dissent, ten years ago, that a federal court could order school integration throughout the Detroit suburbs as a remedy for the city's inner-city segregation.

BLACK GROUPS were even more agitated by a 5-to-4 decision on employment discrimination in a case involving the Memphis Fire Department. Justice White wrote the Court's opinion and was joined in the majority by three Nixon appointees and Justice O'Connor. He ruled that even though the Memphis Fire Department had discriminated against blacks in hiring and promotion, white firemen with more seniority were entitled to keep their jobs ahead of black employees with less seniority. The decision was hailed by the Reagan Justice Department as a vindication of its opposition to racially preferential affirmative action programs.

Justice White was the critical fifth vote in several other cases this term which limit civil liberties. The Reagan Administration's restrictions on travel to Cuba were upheld by a one-vote margin, and the majority included Byron White. Two Nixon appointees, Blackmun and Powell, joined Justices Brennan and Marshall, the recognized liberals, in voting against the validity of the travel regulations. And when the Court voted 5 to 4 that there is a "public safety" exception to the rule of *Miranda* v. *Arizona*, allowing police officers to interrogate an arrested suspect about an abandoned gun, even Justice O'Connor questioned the ruling, as did the liberals and Gerald Ford's appointee, John Paul Stevens. Justice White, however, added his support to Justice Rehnquist's opinion announcing this new qualification to the *Miranda* rule. Another 5-to-4 decision that appears technical but will have a sweeping effect on the ability to obtain court relief against state officials was issued in January. Justice White joined a majority that held for the first time that it is unconstitutional to sue state officials in federal court for violations of state law. This time Justices Blackmun and Stevens joined the Brennan-Marshall team in dissent. That same 5-to-4 lineup, with White in the majority, permitted the City of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to include a crèche as part of its Christmas display, notwithstanding the First Amendment's bar against an "establishment of religion." And five-member majorities, including White, ruled that there is no constitutional right of privacy in prison cells, that evidence obtained after an illegal entry may be used if it could have been obtained independently, and that individuals cannot sue the I.R.S. to take away the preferred tax status of segregated private schools.

As this article was going to press, Justice John Paul Stevens was reported to have lashed out during the annual American Bar Association convention at the Court's conservative Justices for having made unnecessary "far-reaching pronouncements" in several cases raising civil liberties issues. All the instances cited by Justice Stevens were opinions by Byron White—his majority opinions in the exclusionary rule cases, his *Grove City* decision, and his Memphis firemen opinion. Stevens also castigated some of his colleagues for their separate opinion in a fourth case which involved a search-and-seizure issue arising in the Colorado courts. The Supreme Court of Colorado had decided, as a matter of state law, that certain evidence had to be suppressed, and a majority of the United States Supreme Court ruled that it had no jurisdiction to review this question since it was entirely a matter of Colorado law. Three Justices agreed with the jurisdictional decision, but went on to express separately their view on how the issue should be decided under the federal Constitution. At the time, Stevens attacked "the Court's emerging tendency to enlarge its own involvement in litigation conducted by state courts," and he did so again in his A.B.A. speech. The author of the separate opinion—which was approved by Chief Justice Burger and Justice O'Connor—was Byron White.

IN THE LAST years of the Warren Court, perceptive observers knew that the Supreme Court was really being led by Justice William Brennan. Although Earl Warren took the public praise and blame for the Court's direction, many landmark opinions were being written, and critical votes cast, by Brennan. Byron White seems now to have moved into the equivalent position of power behind the Supreme Court's velvet curtain.

A rough measure of a Supreme Court Justice's success in affecting the outcome of cases is the number of dissenting votes he casts. A more discriminating gauge is how frequently he or she is on the prevailing side on an issue decided by a margin of only one or two votes. There were twenty-seven full opinions this year in which a legal issue was decided by a margin of 5 to 4 or 4 to 3. Justice White lost seven of these—fewer than any other member of the Court. There were fifty-four cases decided by full opinion in which three or four Justices dissented from all or part of the ruling of the Court. White was in the minority in only nine of these.

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Another statistical indication of White's influence on the Court concerns the importance of the opinions assigned to him. A significant percentage of the cases that come before the Supreme Court—more than most people realize—are decided by unanimous vote. With some exceptions, of course, the opinions in these cases are not terribly important, and they are frequently assigned to Justices who are available because their efforts are not needed for the more controversial cases. Justice White got fewer of these minor opinion-writing assignments than any other member of the Court.

White did not, of course, win them all. No Justice does. It is ironic that on the last day of the term, when he announced for a Court majority the "good-faith" exception to the exclusionary rule that he had been advocating for the past eight years, White also found himself dissenting when the Court gave permission to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to introduce illegally seized evidence in civil deportation proceedings. The majority said the balance of costs and benefits—which White had relied on in permitting evidence seized in "good faith" to be used—justified the decision. This case ought to make it clear to everybody, including White, how dangerous it is for a court to use a cost-benefit analysis in lieu of applying constitutional principles. White noted that an immigration agent's "primary objective" is to obtain evidence that can be used in a deportation action, and he demonstrated convincingly that exclusion of the evidence he obtains illegally is a most effective deterrent. Five votes balanced the costs and benefits differently, and as a result the most important deterrent against unlawful conduct by immigration agents has now been eliminated.

Even after twenty-two years on the Supreme Court, White, who is now in his mid-60s, is among the younger Justices. In 1978 Professor Leon Friedman, editor of a five-volume treatise on Supreme Court Justices, reviewed White's first fifteen years on the Court and said of him that he was a "maverick," and a "middle-of-the-road Justice." His voting record in recent times, however, manifests a judicial philosophy that is very close to Ronald Reagan's ideal.

NATHAN LEWIN

Nathan Lewin, a contributing editor of TNR, is a Washington trial lawyer.

When 'miracle cures' don't cure.

LONG TIME DYING

BY RICHARD D. LAMM

LATE one March afternoon in a back room of St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver, I happened to remark, in the course of a talk to a small group of health lawyers and one reporter, that "we all have a duty to die." The next day, all hell broke loose.

The headline in *The Denver Post* announced: THE ELDERLY TERMINALLY ILL 'HAVE A DUTY TO DIE,' LAMM SAYS. The appalled health lawyers hastily called a press conference to try to correct the *Post*'s version, pointing out what I had actually said: that the terminally ill should be permitted to die with dignity instead of being hooked up to life-support machines long after consciousness has faded and after there is no longer any hope of recovery. By that time, however, newspapers across the country were proclaiming that I wanted the elderly and dying to "get out of the way." For example, the New York *Daily News*, in its inimitable fashion, screamed: AGED ARE TOLD TO DROP DEAD.

Following the story, brutal as my statement appeared, I received close to three thousand letters. Despite the distortions, the vast majority of those who wrote to me agreed with the gist of what I had said. The response showed clearly that many people have come to believe that medical technology has run amok. "These machines are manacles, not miracles," wrote one woman. "There comes a time when aggressive treatment is not only counterproductive but cruel." Another wrote of her mother, "who does not know me or other members of the family" and who is hooked indefinitely to a machine:

> The family assets are expended at the rate of over $2,000 per month for part-time assistance in her care—money that she would have wished allocated to the grandchildren's education. . . . [S]o here I am, essentially with a corpse we cannot bury. . . . As you know, we are a medical family, and I am not decrying advancement in medical techniques or advocating euthanasia, but there comes a point that the perpetuation of a pulse and lung and kidney function exacts too great a price from family and society.

Richard D. Lamm is the governor of the State of Colorado.

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A third woman asked, "Who owns my body, Medicare, the hospital, the state, or me?"

It would seem that a new liberation movement is forming, a movement for liberation *from* our machines when they are used not to prolong living but to prolong dying. We have reached a point where doctors have the capability of keeping patients alive long after they have ceased to exist as thinking, feeling human beings. Do patients or their families have the right to refuse the "benefits" of these machines? This is partly a civil rights issue, partly a health care issue, and partly a very delicate and volatile issue of "substituted" judgment, where one person makes a life-and-death decision for another.

There is a relentless kind of technological imperative, particularly in the medical field: if we invent a machine, we have a duty to use it. In an article in *Nursing* magazine a nurse writes that we "can't shut our eyes" to the fact that resuscitation machinery is very expensive, and that "if the equipment is not used, there is no return on the investment." When faced with a decision to treat or not to treat a very sick patient, a doctor will usually order the available medical technology, no matter how ill the patient, no matter how much the expense drains resources from other patients. After all, in virtually every case, the patient or the patient's family isn't paying the bill. Instead, a third party insurer, or more often Medicare, stands ready to hand the doctor a blank check, leaving it to the doctor and the hospital to fill in the numbers. If a doctor doesn't order technological intervention in the last stages of the patient's illness, he is faced with the possibility of a medical malpractice suit, bad publicity, and a possible stain on his career. And there is no denying the fact that both he and his hospital stand to gain financially from the intervention, even if it does nothing but draw out the process of dying for the patient. The final result is too often treatment that is scarcely distinguishable from torture.

There are a number of human forces at work here. Medicine is an "activist" profession and doctors are trained to see death as a failure. The families of the terminally ill often feel a moral ambivalence in the face of death. Patients themselves sometimes fear death more than the technology. But the overwhelming response to the furor I inadvertently touched off was captured in one elderly man's letter to me, "I do not fear death. I fear the indignity of deterioration, dependence, and hopeless pain."

THE EMOTIONAL toll on families and doctors faced with the choice between life-sustaining technology and death is only one part of the problem. Another part is the staggering financial cost. Last year health care nationwide cost $355 billion—$45 million an hour, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Governor Thomas Kean of New Jersey describes health care as the "Pac Man of his budget," eating up his ability to solve other social problems. The time is not far off when there will be a direct conflicts between the health of the individual and the health of the society. We cannot afford all the medical miracles that the profession stands ready to give, and choices will have to be made about the distribution of limited medical resources. Technological immortality is running into fiscal reality.

A large proportion of our health care bill already goes for the care of patients who have no chance of recovery. We spend 28 percent of Medicare funds on the 6 percent of Medicare patients who die each year. In other words, we spend four times as much on these patients who die as we do on other Medicare patients.

One doctor, writing in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, sums up the dilemma:

> Because of our great and proper humanitarian desire to preserve life, we have difficulty desisting in our medical efforts, even when the probability of the patient's recovery approaches zero, and even when the costs in a futile attempt to save one life may consume resources that might save many. The costs of trying to preserve the life of one cirrhotic patient with bleeding esophageal varices might be used to treat and prevent alcoholism in many persons. The cost of one heart transplant could support smoking-cessation programs, plasma-lipid-lowering diets, hypertension treatment, and physical-exercise programs for many. The cost of treating one premature newborn with respiratory-arrest syndrome could be used to provide nourishment for many expectant mothers, thus combating a major cause of prematurity.

Many of these high-tech procedures and machines (ventilators, nuclear magnetic resonance scanners, and renal dialysis machines for the terminally ill, among others) are so expensive that they interfere with our ability to pay for other medical procedures. The cost of high technology is one of the main factors cited by health care analysts for the decline in funds for prenatal care and health care for the elderly.

These machines present policymakers with much more difficult decisions than they had to face in the past. There was little moral ambivalance, for example, over the passage of comprehensive health care for mothers and infants in 1963. It is a different thing altogether, in a time of limited resources, to confront a choice between spending $100,000 for medical treatments in the last year of life and providing almost four thousand schoolchildren with lifetime immunizations from polio. The Colorado legislature, like many legislatures, has been reacting to federal budget cuts by cutting social programs, restricting A.F.D.C. patients to "emergency health procedures," and tightening eligibility standards for federal assistance of all kinds. Hospitals, state legislatures, and even the National Institutes of Health should be asking: how many Barney Clarks can this country afford?

THE EASIEST issue both politically and morally is the "right-to-die" issue, and it is here that the new liberation movement is being felt. California passed the first right-to-die law in 1976, and nineteen other states and the District of Columbia have passed similar or identical laws. Such legislation gives doctors and hospitals immunity from civil or criminal prosecution if they have acted according to a "living will." The heart of a living will is

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simple: "If I should have an injury, disease, or illness regarded by my physician as incurable and terminal, and if my physician determines that the application of life-sustaining procedures would serve only to prolong artificially the dying process, I direct that such procedures be withdrawn and that I be permitted to die."

But if there is no living will, a host of questions arise. What is the duty of the medical profession? Whose judgment can be substituted for the patient's? When patients can no longer make their wishes known, who speaks for them? In cases when a family tells a doctor that no extraordinary measures should be taken to keep the patient alive, does the government or an interested observer have the right to intervene? Should nontreatment be a legally protected medical alternative? In many cases, medical technology is merely imposing life on a corpse: individuals who are brain dead are put on respirators and are continually resuscitated. In one a dying woman was resuscitated seventy times in a twenty-four-hour period, until she was finally allowed to die. It would seem that the best medical care does not necessarily make for the best treatment.

Should hope of recovery be a basis for determining the type of treatment a patient receives? And is recovery the restoration of full health, a return to a vegetative state without consciousness, or a state in between? As new medical technologies become available, we need to be assessing them in terms of the quality of life they offer. We need a better measure than merely the existence of a heartbeat. We must begin to distinguish between "biological life" and human life.

The courts have recognized three main criteria to guide medical professions in ambiguous situations. First, if a patient is brain dead the medical profession can declare him dead, even though his body functions. Second, physicians do not have to treat a "hopeless" patient. If no medical therapy can reverse a "hopeless" patient, treatment can be suspended. It is up to the medical profession to decide who is "hopeless." Third, in cases like that of Karen Ann Quinlan—in which physicians testified that they could not, under oath, foreclose the possibility of a "miracle"—treatment can be discontinued if there is "no reasonable possibility of a patient returning to a cognitive, sapient state."

But these guidelines are minimal, and even the most fundamental question, "Is a person dead?," differs from state to state. Twelve states have not adopted the so-called uniform brain death law. In one New York case a 19-year-old man who had been shot in the head was comatose; he had no brain waves and no reflex responses, his pupils were dilated and fixed, and he was breathing only through a respirator. However, the district attorney warned the parents that if they discontinued the life-support system the state could lose the case against the assailant on the grounds that this was the actual cause of death.

In another widely publicized case, physicians in California ended life support for a comatose patient who was

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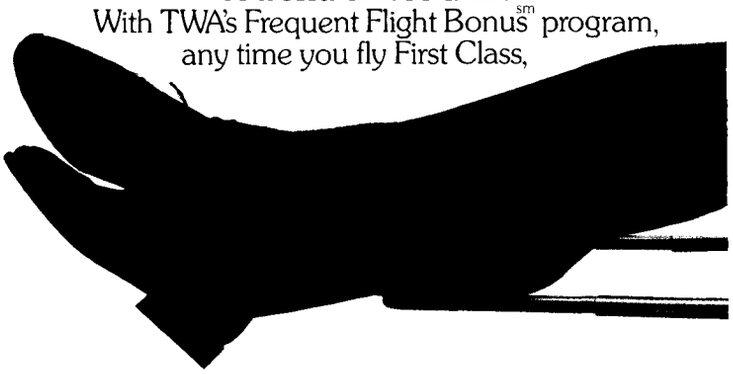

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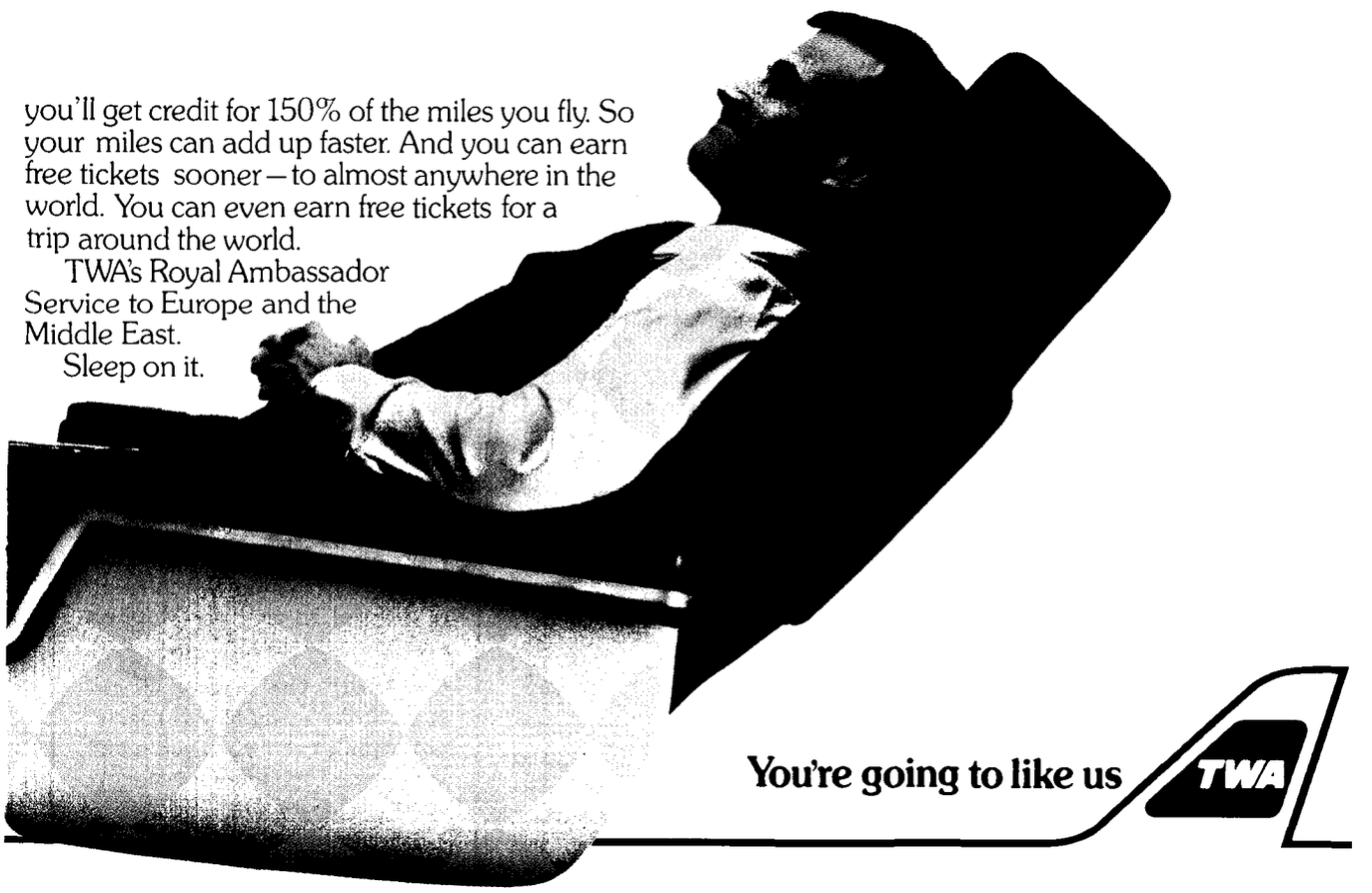
clearly never going to regain consciousness. Although the patient's wife and family had consented, an irresponsible district attorney charged the doctor with murder. The California Court of Appeals dismissed the charges, observing, "A murder prosecution is a poor way to design an ethical and moral code for doctors who are faced with decisions concerning the use of costly and extraordinary life-support equipment." The court considered the distinction between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" procedures, but instead adopted a rule that looked at "whether the proposed treatment is proportionate or disproportionate in terms of the benefits to be gained versus the burdens caused."

Whatever the ultimate standard, it is clear that most people recognize that at some point treatment becomes both counterproductive and cruel. Few would disagree with Pope John Paul II, who stated in 1980 that "When inevitable death is imminent in spite of the means used, it is permitted in conscience to refuse forms of treatment that would only secure a precarious and burdensome prolongation of life. . . ." The refusal of treatment "is not the equivalent of suicide; on the contrary it should be considered as an acceptance of the human condition."

The movement to reaffirm the dignity of human life and death in the face of possible technological immortality is growing slowly. People who do not want to be placed on life-support systems are exploring options, in addition to the living will, for determining the conditions for treatment or nontreatment of injury or illness. California and Colorado have passed bills allowing patients to appoint attorneys to represent them in medical areas. Patients who have a verbal understanding with their doctors that no extraordinary measures should be taken to prolong their dying could formalize that arrangement in a statement that would be placed in their medical records both in the doctor's office and at the hospital. These instructions would not be legally binding, but would carry a strong moral force.

But the best option currently available to the terminally ill is to arrange for hospice care. The philosophy of hospices is to ease the dying process by providing whatever pain medication or psychological support is needed. Hospices give terminally ill patients and their families choices about their care, including such extreme choices as refusing nutrition and fluids when death is imminent. Medicaid and Medicare should pay for hospice care as an alternative to hospital care for the dying because the cost is lower and the quality of care is higher. Some hospitals, like the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Denver, are beginning to allocate a few beds to hospice care for the dying. This allows the patient or his family to choose what kind of treatment he will receive in the last months of life.

However, these changes are occurring very slowly. In the meantime, countless human beings are hooked to the miracles of modern medicine, machines which too often offer them not recovery, but a living death. □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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Fairly Deep in the Heart of Texas

Houston, today. A young man and a young woman are driving along in a pickup. He is violently cursing the garage that didn't fix his car and forced him to borrow this truck; she is trying to restrain his anger and his language. They both speak in the Texan accent and diction that we non-Texans know so well from films.

Last Night at the Alamo
(Cinecom International)

That's the opening of *Last Night at the Alamo*, and it has two effects. First, it's discouraging because we think we're going to see One More—another beer-guzzling, foulmouthed, southern-prole yarn. Second, that very discouragement soon leads to pleasure because it's deceptive: the film that follows is not just One More. It has the beer and the cussing and the proles, all right, but it's genuine, forthright, serious, somewhat daring.

The title, too, is deceptive, though wryly. The Alamo is the name of a bar, and this is its last night before demolition. The two young people are on their way to the Alamo where they cease to be principal characters and become members of a group. The rest of the story takes place in and around the bar, and all that happens is that the people who come in, most of them regulars, behave the way they usually behave. Except for one of them, their behavior is little touched by the fact that this is closing night. The taciturn patron is as monosyllabic as ever; the embattled husband is still quarreling with the wife who telephones him at the Alamo; the Mexican restaurant owner drops in for one of his drinking games; the barfly of the place continues to bum beers; the bitter guy looking for a fight is still looking; two curvy young women who come in to "hang out" are familiar in type, even if not regulars; and the protagonist, as far as he can be called so, still struts, still prattles of going to Hollywood. (He is the one most concerned with the closing. He phones a legislator in order to get the demolition stopped but, as everyone knows, to no avail.)

This kind of script is familiar in the theater, and not only in America. (I once saw "this" play in Germany.) The bar is the center to which lives gravitate, where they reveal themselves, entangle, disentangle, and move on. The essence of the form is that, for most of the characters, nothing changes. The bar is like a spiritual fluoroscope behind which the characters pass, revealing their characters en route. As soon as we can see that *Last Night at the Alamo* is not going to be about the opening pair and that there's not going to be any plot, we ask ourselves—because it's a film—whether the piece is going to have the guts to stay the course. If it were a play (which, with about twenty minutes' revision, it could be), we probably wouldn't ask that question because the theater is the place of origin and the habitat of the species. But, on the screen, a work of this kind requires courage because it controverts cinematic dicta; and *Last Night at the Alamo* does have the courage: to stick to its form and to accept the charge that this form lays on it these days.

The form is naturalistic. And by now, as is increasingly recognized, naturalism has changed its historic function. Once it was primarily informational: naturalistic artists were chiefly concerned with telling harsh facts to a sheltered or evasive audience. But, in our information-drenched culture, what mere facts about our society do we need from films or plays? Today the function of naturalism is sheerly as one more option of style. And as with any other style, it exists as a means of conveyance, not as a collection of dramatized data. The naturalistic work now asks you to look, not at its veristic surface and its avoidance of maneuver, but beneath.

Eagle Pennell, who originated this film, and Kim Henkel, who wrote the script, recognize this. They want us to know as soon as possible that what we see and hear is only the means to reveal the invisible and unspoken. The filmmakers' daring is both in risking our initial false impression—with the first few minutes—and in accepting the charge that the "new" naturalism lays on them, to reveal and enrich below the nitty-gritty surface.

It's in that regard that this good film falters somewhat. Pennell and Henkel know these characters, know that their incessant vile language is no more than a canker of discontent with their lives, oblique evidence of hunger for something else, recognition of the spaces within them and around them. This much the film understands: but it does little with this understanding. We see people who, under their bluster, are hurting; but Pennell and Henkel convey little sense of why they are hurting, what they want, what they have come to perceive about their lives. Certainly I don't ask for specifics, like planks in a party platform; in fact, what I miss is any suggestion of the unspecifiable, too large or ambiguous to articulate, buried under the barroom jawing. For contrast, take Horton Foote's *Tender Mercies*, which dealt with similar Texans. Admittedly, it is not a naturalistic work;

FILMS WORTH SEEING

After the Rehearsal. Ingmar Bergman's three-character meditation on aspects of the theater, done with cinematic mastery. (Reviewed 6/25/84)

The Bostonians. Nothing like an adequate rendering of Henry James—the Verena is a blank—but Vanessa Redgrave is superb as Olive Chancellor, and the look of it all is lovely. (8/6/84)

The Muppets Take Manhattan. The Muppets get their college show produced on Broadway. Enough of a script to give the Muppets enough to do. (8/13&20/84)

Top Secret! The makers of *Airplane!* strike again! Not as keenly, but brightly even when you're not laughing. This time it's a spy-spoof. (8/13&20/84)

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but it moves past the details of its people's lives, even of their well-wrought drama, to glimpse a chilling truth—some intimation of Gloucester's vision: "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods." Pennell and Henkel stop short of anything comparable—any insight, whatever it might be, grim or heartening—to give their film a feeling of completeness. They prove that they are serious, but they don't give much hint of what they are serious about.

Still, as far as they have gone, they have worked intently and intensely. In the whole structure of *Last Night at the Alamo*, only one element seems contrived. About midway, two men peer through the windows of a trailer across from the bar and watch a young woman walking around half dressed. They know her as a "dirty lay"; and we know that a scene is coming in which one of the men will go in for a quick score and that the woman, despite her easiness in the past, will resent it with tears or with anger. It's the one plotty strophe in a script full of honest familiarities.

PENNELL has directed with such fierce simplicity, so hot a concern for verity, that the film's pace and rhythm and editing seem to be governed by the characters. It was shot in 16mm black-and-white by Brian Huberman and Eric A. Edwards, is now blown up to 35mm, and looks comfortable in its new dimensions. I haven't seen Pennell's one previous film, *The Whole Shootin' Match*, but I'd like to see it—and more Pennell.

The film of Henkel's previous script, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, I certainly have not seen and don't regret it. (He appears in *Alamo* as the taciturn man.) But he has a sharp ear and affectionate humor.

This is especially true in his writing of the sulphurous husband played by Louis Perryman. This man is, in stages, a conventional marriage-hating barroom grouse; a man who uses grousing to conceal affection for his wife because he thinks that affection saps his masculinity; and a man driven nearly nutty by this conflict. Perryman plays the role with bile and shame that burn right through the three levels.

Sonny Carl Davis, as Cowboy, the one who yatters about going to Hollywood and who wears a Stetson to conceal his premature baldness, is a strong conscious-defensive fake. But all the cast—with the exception of the barfly, who "acts"—are valid and vital, a tribute to Pennell's ability to choose actors and win their confidence.

Last Night at the Alamo was made in The Old Barn, a Houston bar. The shooting, which took just over three weeks and cost $50,000, was funded by three foundations, including the National Endowment for the Arts; Pennell had to scrounge for another $11,000 completion money. The difference between his film and all the expensive junk around us is not just that high budgets make everybody nervous. The difference is that almost all the expensive films, no matter how clever and entertaining they may sometimes be, are corporate enterprises. *Last Night at the Alamo* exists for a basic reason: one man, Pennell, wanted to make it. For our country and our time, it helps to redefine the idea of the personal film.

EDWARD ROTHSTEIN ON MUSIC

The Return of Romanticism

"There are two problems with modern music," the composer William Schuman reminds us, quoting a witticism in the program for the New York Philharmonic's recent contemporary music festival. "One, that it's not heard; and two, that it's heard." Alas, both those problems have become chronic—the "modern" in "modern music" now extends over three-quarters of a century. For most listeners the music is tolerated when heard, celebrated when not. The heart of our musical life stubbornly lies in the last century.

But this festival in early June—the most important new music event of the New York season, including three symposia, ten concerts, seven world premieres, thirteen local or national premieres, three orchestras, six conductors, well-known soloists, and a program booklet with interviews and essays—was meant to help undo all that. This is the second annual new music festival presented by the New York Philharmonic under the artistic direction of Jacob Druckman, the Philharmonic's composer-in-residence; both festivals invoked the considerable prestige and resources of the orchestra and both promoted a grand thesis.

Underlying that thesis was the hope that the disappointment of the public with twentieth-century music is coming to an end. For if that audience has found itself most comfortable with nineteenth-century Romanticism, and has rejected twentieth-century music for its supposed aridity, Mr. Druckman is going to make a match: no more brain-spun musical systems, no more academic twiddling with serial theory, no more music of Apollonian purity, sending out its rarefied tones to a very few listeners. The Dionysian, rather, is upon us, the beginnings of a New Romanticism, as powerful and important as the older Romanticism to which our classical audiences remain wedded. The new music is creating a new world made of "nostalgia, lushness, sensuality, mystery, grandiose gesture and intensely personal expression."

Last year's festival was titled "Since 1968, A New Romanticism?"—dating the revival from that landmark year of countercultural commotion. This year the more confidently titled festival was "The New Romanticism—A Broader View." There was something for almost everyone—all based on what Mr. Druckman saw as a new "transcendentalism" in music deriving from the counterculture of the 1960s. He said: "Maybe the manifesto of New Romanticism was the Beatles' film, *Yellow Submarine*." What he proposed is nothing less than the musical Greening of America, growing out of what Gregory Sandow, a music critic for *The Village Voice*, said was a "longing for a simpler, more honest, and more humane musical life."

Yellow Submarine or not, there has certainly been a change in compositional styles during the last two decades. They are now more tonal, more eclectic, more lyrical, more dramatic, and more conservative. But the greening may still not have come. Last year the promise of New Romanticism led to an estimated 70 percent attendance figure—impressive indeed for new music festivals—along with about a half mil-

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lion dollar loss for the orchestra, a badge of honor won in a good cause. This year the Romanticism may have been promised more forcefully, but there was less audience response: 20 percent seemed too high a figure for attendance at some concerts, and the ten-concert festival must have lost a good deal more money.

IN FACT, all the peculiarities of contemporary new music concerts were much in evidence. Aside from concerts with big-name performers, those present seemed either composers, critics, cronies, or the curious. The festival, in a typically twentieth-century gesture, segregated new music from the usual concert season. And though the event was marketed as comfortable for the "mass" Romantic audience, the festival could not let go of avant-garde pretentions. "We are the cutting edge," proclaimed Zubin Mehta in the program book. One composer at a symposium even said that "The Romantic looks forward, he never looks over his shoulder"—true, but only if the Romantic is facing a mirror.

Moreover, this season actually drew attention to various fractures within the new music community itself, particularly those between the mandarins of high art and the more pop practioners. Two concerts were devoted to the "downtown" school of composers—so-called because many of them give concerts in lofts in Soho and TriBeCa; "downtown" has trappings of what used to be called "avant-garde," containing elements of rock, pop, punk, jazz, electronic experimentation, performance art. "Uptown" is more established (Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center), more academic (Columbia, Juilliard), and more connected to the highbrow tradition; the "uptown" school was given its own bit of "advanced" territory in a miniature computer music festival.

Where in all this was the New Romanticism, or anything simpler or more humane in musical life? How to justify the judgment of Jacob Druckman that new music is "flourishing"? The best works played during the festival had little to do with countercultural Romanticism—including Pierre Boulez's "Domaines" (1968), Elliott Carter's "Brass Quintet" (1974), and the world premiere of Charles Wuorinen's "Bamboula Squared." The last, like Iannis Xenakis's striking "Kahl Perr" (1983), was composed using sophisticated mathematical theories, but was also the most exuberantly imaginative and affecting of the festival's premieres. All these works are intricate technically, hardly seeming as if they grew, as in Romantic cliché, from a gentleman brooding on a windswept moor, nor from a long-haired countercultural rebel eschewing intellect for transcendental experimentation. Moreover, the most vapid "uptown" works were those which were most conscientiously "New Romantic." George Crumb's "A Haunted Landscape" (1984) in its world premiere, for example, was almost a parody of the composer's familiar mysticism; he even included a sustained low B-flat with its 60-cycle-per-second frequency, mistakenly believing that because this was the frequency of alternating current, he was tapping a basic electrical property of the universe.

To add to the confusion, just what is the Apollonian past against which this Dionysian present is reacting? Paul Griffiths, the music critic of *The London Times*, begins his essay in the program quoting Varése: "What does one mean by romanticism? Everything is romantic if a man expresses himself. I see a great deal of romanticism in Mr. Webern, whom people find so abstract." What music isn't Romantic, and doesn't appeal to what Mr. Druckman called the "sensual, mysterious, ecstatic?" Isn't Berg's "Lulu" as "Romantic" as the melancholic wisps of Webern? What about Cage's gently prodding prepared piano works, "Sonatas and Interludes"? Or Boulez's prismatic *"Le Marteau sans Maître?"* Or Messiaen's music? Or Ligeti's?

NOT even the nature of Romanticism itself is too clear. The composer Hans Werner Henze drew several laughs reading contradictory definitions of Romanticism. But it was clear here that the rubric had significance not just as a description of the music being heard, but as a description of the desired audience. It was a way of connecting what was being written today with the nineteenth century, which is of central importance for the large high art audiences, for metaphysical as well as melodic reasons.

Still, something is indeed happening in musical composition. There is a revival of interest in themes that were eclipsed by avant-garde orthodoxy in the 1950s—references to childhood (heard in Oliver Knussen's opera based on Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*), to folk ritual (as in Harrison Britwistle's "Down by the Greenwood Side"), to religion. Mr. Druckman pointed out, for example, how individual composers' concerns have changed from exploring technical or structural material, to religious and mystical—to Romantic—concerns. In the early 1950s Boulez could produce works simply called "Structures"; two decades later he produced "Rituel." Stockhausen wrote "Kontra-Punkte" with its rigorous control over musical ingredients; he is now working on a series of astrological operas which are going to dwarf Wagner's in length.

MOREOVER, a new genre of "neo-Romantic" works has come into being that is haunted by the weight of the Romantic tradition. Henze's "Tristan," for example, was given its United States premiere, though it has been available in a Deutsche Grammophon recording. It includes quotations from Wagner, Chopin, Brahms, and refers to the Tristan legend. Like Hans Jürgen Syberberg's movies, it is overladen with kitsch and ponderous signs and portents. "Tristan" has been highly praised for its structural invention and for its invocations of myth; but it is, I think, a manifestly "bad" work, awash in campy indulgence, morbidly relishing its own nostalgia.

But what most characterized the works at the festival was a preference for "the natural"—those forces and facts we see as primal, underlying our cultural inventions. Nature turned up again and again in composers' commentary on their works, and even pictorially flourished in such compositions as the Tasmanian composer Peter Sculthorpe's tropical "Mangrove." This "theme" or attitude is becoming central; and it is far different from the attitude of most avant-gardists in the 1950s, with their arbitrary chance operations on musical material and intricate serial systems all avoiding any hint of "natural" harmony. The concerts of music composed with computers were particularly preoccupied with the world of the natural as counterpoint to the world of the machine, mixing synthesized and natural sounds, invoking the laws and forces of nature. Charles Dodge's impressionistic work, "The Waves," attempted to suggest both the lulling stillness and the power of oceanic waves. John Chowning's "Turenas"

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for Quadraphonic Tape (1972), which filled Avery Fisher Hall with 3-D sound, was so preoccupied with nature, that the title is an anagram of "Natures." Charles Wuorinen stated his musical goal in "Bamboula Squared" explicitly: it was an attempt, using a computer, to "simulate certain natural processes."

THESE concerns with nature are part of a more general Romantic transformation of our culture which Mr. Druckman correctly links to the 1960s. Countercultural Romanticism, like its forerunner, celebrated the irrational and the forces of nature, and scorned established Western manners for those of more "natural" cultures. These attitudes have trickled "uptown," in varying degrees, throughout our culture. But the "downtown" school of composers and performers are the direct musical heirs of the counterculture. (Mr. Sandow calls this "countercultural classical music.") This music often aspires to the prestige of mainstream art, but it is grounded in countercultural ideas and ideologies.

A tourist in the lofts of Soho, for example, would find a Romanticism that makes "uptown" concerns with nature seem mild indeed. There is music written for "homemade" or "natural" instruments—constructed of wood and even bone. There is even a "downtown" composer who has achieved some renown writing music for animals—including a sonata with an extensive part for howling dogs. There are invocations of music of other cultures, those "closer to nature"—music of Bali and of Brazil, and of singers who have learned chanting techniques from the monks of Tibet. There are attempts to get closer to the "natural" musical materials themselves, such as the sounds of the overtones that are the property of every vibrating string. And, of course, there is the influence of the truly countercultural music, rock itself, which in such singers as Laurie Anderson, becomes just slightly wry.

This Romanticism was most directly evident in two concerts bundled together under the misleading titles "The New Virtuosity." Dean Drummond played several works using a thirty-one-tone scale which avoids the earthly material tensions of the familiar bourgeois scale. Joan La Barbara exploited double tones and overtones to evoke mystical images of Nature in a sonic indulgence called "October Music: Star Showers and Extraterrestrials." Diamánda Galás's vocal pyrotechnics included primal loon cries and animal screams; in fine countercultural style she sought, as she put it, "extremes of consciousness." One "homicidal love-song" was titled "Wild Woman with Steaknives."

At the best moments in this "downtown" music, as when Robert Dick demonstrated virtuosic atmospheric effects on his flutes, mixing Oriental musical gestures, jazz, and languorous introspection with Western performance style, there was an intriguing sense of artifice being stripped away; at its worst moments—as widespread in the festival as in the lofts—the quest for the natural led only to wild invention and indulgence.

BUT THIS music also differs from the counterculture. So "natural" is this Romanticism that it is not explicitly political, and it is never "revolutionary." Despite the flamboyantly radical stands of such composers as Berio, Nono, and Henze, and despite the dutiful invocation of left-wing sentiment in much of this music, it is more fashion than passion. Even the political content of such works as Philip Glass's opera *Satyagraha*, based on the life of Gandhi, is "glossy," stylized and spiritualized. And Galás's supposedly pained singing (including a piece mourning the victims of the Greek junta of 1967) is mere display—cold, expressionless spectacle.

The energy of the New Romanticism, even in its "uptown" incarnations in George Crumb and Roger Reynolds and Charles Wuorinen, does not originate in opposition to a mainstream, or from a "progressive" technical or political or musical program. And the sonic products of computers—once the "sounds of the future"—are now just ingredients in compositions of differing styles. In fact, what has occurred during the last two decades, and what these festivals have finally codified, is a major shift in our musical culture. There is now no musical movement which can be called "avant-garde," which can represent a "progressive" stance. The entire notion of musical progress must be discarded. As Paul Griffiths rightly notes, music does not progress.

Hilton Kramer has shown that the avant-garde in painting disappeared because its manners and attitudes became established as mainstream points of view. In music, of course, the situation was just the opposite. The mainstream—represented in the major repertory of our major concert halls—has always been completely oblivious to the avant-garde, neither absorbing it nor responding to it, settled comfortably instead in nineteenth-century forms and styles. This left the avant-garde in clubby isolation, lacking any objects for its aesthetic shocks.

This isolation, and music's general fragmentation in this century, has been explained away by persistent arguments that music is an "art in progress," that one reason new music has generally failed to find a large audience is that it is, as Mr. Mehta puts it "on the cutting edge." Thus, each age just begins to appreciate the works of its predecessor and finds its own too painfully futuristic. But this is not even true of the nineteenth century. And in the twentieth century it merely expresses the interests of the avant-garde, its belief in a musical future reached through stylistic or technical invention, and a sharp break with the bourgeois tradition.

The problem is that even with the death of the avant-garde, even with the appeals being made to nature rather than to invention, our musical world does not flourish. Composition itself, as the Philharmonic's festival showed, generally languishes, with intermittent bright spots like sunlight through thick leaves. Audiences attend new music concerts mainly for performers, not for composers. And in the mainstream musical world itself, where nineteenth-century Romanticism grows wild, there is insecurity in the midst of prosperity. The search for audiences—ever larger audiences, audiences who will fill halls, and welcome television and radio broadcasts—this has become a perverse preoccupation of musical life.

MEANWHILE the heritage of Romanticism filtered through the counterculture is around us, not only idealizing nature as a model and source of energy, but also changing attitudes to musical life—the belief that any pleasing sounds or intriguing experimentation deserves the appellation "art"; that music that is grounded in intellect is "academic"; that criticism is meant to be appreciative and serious no matter what "sound event" comes its way; that affirmative action for women and minorities should play an active role in concert programming. These attitudes

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can lead to a sorry state of artistic affairs.

But the concern with the "natural" in music can raise some hopes, too. After all, the natural is what we take to be shared, fundamental, the groundwork of our culture and our music, and if such fundamentals are being sought with seriousness and energy, the results can be invigorating. But this is not the Romanticism of the nineteenth century. It has neither its conviction nor its belief in the powers of imagination. There is no Greening of America, though we do seem submerged in a submarine of unknown hue.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS. "I feel the urge to open the windows a little. Air! More air!—" This is how Nietzsche expressed his revulsion at the music of Romanticism, of the virtuoso, of the musical "actor," of the mass audience—"In a formula: Wagner and Liszt." But Nietzsche, unlike most critics, had an opportunity to put his aesthetics into practice. He was an accomplished pianist and an amateur composer. Most of his musical works were written between 1854 (when he was 10 years old) and 1874 (when he still believed Wagner was a messianic figure). Other compositions date from later years, after the Wagnerian idolator became an anti-Wagnerian iconoclast, including an oratorio, "*Hymnus an das Leben*," published in 1887.

A rare performance of some of the philosopher's early piano music was presented in early May at the Serra di Felice Gallery in Soho, by Utaco Knowles. I expected to hear elements of Wagneritis, spiced with hints of Zarathustrian posturing, perhaps some self-conscious visionary daring, idiosyncratic aphorisms, sharp antagonisms, and subtle analyses—musical versions of Nietzsche's philosophy. I also expected the music would not be all that good. Some of these expectations were not disappointed. Some of the music was indeed studentish and slight. And "Ermanarich," a pianistic tone poem, had all the tantrums, episodic wit, grandiose gestures, and formulaic ingredients of some of Nietzsche's more cantankerous proclamations.

What was unexpected was the music's youthful charms. Nearly all the music on the program was written by a prodigious 18-year-old, and most of it had an air of innocence and enthusiasm, looking not to the ponderous

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world of Wagnerian drama, but to early Romanticism. Even the fragmented quality of some of the pieces was an invocation of the early Romantic fascination with the aphorism, a fascination which Nietzsche later turned into a philosophical style. It was as if this music naïvely anticipated his intellectual maturity. He wanted music with bold exuberance, golden melody, light steps, the spirit of dance.

In his philosophy Nietzsche challenged the solemn values and "mass" culture of the period, aesthetic messianism and the religion of art. He scorned the audience on whom these effects were aimed, "on the mass, on the immature, on the blasé, on the sick, on the idiots, on Wagnerians!" These attitudes later were linked to the crisp anti-Romanticism of early modernism, with its scorn of the bourgeois audience. But Nietzsche's challenge was also made in part to the moral tradition of high art itself. Curiously, this challenge has succeeded in ways Nietzsche could not have imagined: it has led to another "mass audience" and another musical culture—to the contemporary pop world, to the hothouse atmosphere of contemporary musical commerce and to confusion over music's artistic values. "Air! More Air!"

Readers of my piece on Liberace last month remembered what I did not: Paul Muni was not Chopin in the film *A Song to Remember*. Cornell Wilde was, his fingers aided by a soundtrack featuring Arthur Rubinstein's pianism. Paul Muni, one correspondent munificently recalled, actually played Chopin's teacher—Jozef Antoni Franciszek Elsner. In atonement, an essay on composers in the movies. . . .

DISSOLUTE DYNASTY

The Kennedys: An American Drama by Peter Collier and David Horowitz

(Summit Books, 576 pp., $20.95)

BY MIDGE DECTER

THE story of Joseph P. Kennedy and his children—now his grandchildren as well—is a story that the American public seems never tired of hearing told. How many books comprise the library of Kennedyana by now? Whether written to celebrate or to expose (most, wittingly or unwittingly, do both), each of these books has been avidly greeted. We have just been presented with another, by Peter Collier and David Horowitz, highly successful joint practictioners of that peculiar literary form long ago misnamed "investigative journalism." This new book, too, which carries the tale down through the sorrows of the third generation, is being handsomely rewarded in every sense.

It is difficult not to feel that there is something overheated and possibly unhealthy in the country's endless willingness to feed on the Kennedys, in its insatiable hunger to know the private details of lives whose only real call upon our attention, after all, is that they are, or were, public lives. Teddy, to be sure, remains an issue among us. But the others are gone; they are dead or in retreat. Why can we not, with the passage of so much time, give them a decent burial?

Well, for one thing the story of the Kennedys happens to make an especially rich narrative—not, as Collier and Horowitz would have it, "an American drama," but a human drama of irresistible proportions. Four brothers, each in turn sent—by what? by whom?—on the errand of becoming President; the killing of the oldest brother in war; the assassination of the next two brothers; the large and abject and scandal-ridden failure of the last; and behind and beneath and surrounding it all, the remorseless father who would, had he been able, have taken the preferment for himself. A Greek tragedy, people given to dropping the name of the Greeks have said; or, according to others, a Faustian one. If Joseph P. Kennedy in his youth made some sort of pact with the devil, he more than amply paid out for it. Whatever his brutality, and whatever the unwonted glory achieved through that brutality, he was a father who had, by the time of his own death, witnessed the death from unnatural causes of four of his nine children, and the misery and ruination of how many others we do not even yet know for sure.

For another thing, the passion to dish the dirt on the high and mighty, even (or perhaps especially) among those who have themselves conferred the height and might, is eternal and universal. This is the passion that has always sustained the gossip industry. And dirt, it must be admitted, the Kennedys have provided aplenty, in every form, in every generation: political, sexual, familial, even criminal. Indeed, can one speak of violating the privacy of people who have themselves been at so little pains to avoid impropriety?

Still, something more and something special is involved in the apparently unappeasable public appetite for Kennedy lore. We are commanded by both their defenders and their detractors to take the Kennedys as a whole, and as a unit they have become a kind of political touchstone. Through them, through our attitudes to them, we fancy that we gain some understanding of ourselves as a political com-

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munity. We need to ask ourselves, for instance, is Teddy the true heir of Jack or, as has more than once been suggested, is Ronald Reagan? If Bobby had lived, what would have been the state of things in the fateful '70s? Who, in fact, was Bobby? The years have gone by, and no Kennedy waits any longer in the wings (not even for that great publicity machine which had kept the faith beyond all hope); yet such questions continue to seem important.

How they should have continued to seem important is a story no Kennedy book has succeeded in making clear, or has even sought to make clear. Although they have uncovered a number of new details, as well as strung out all the old ones, Collier and Horowitz do no better in this particular regard than their predecessors. It has been said that the Kennedys were our first and only truly royal family. Certainly they conducted themselves like one, assuming an inherent right of succession, demanding absolute loyalty from their servitors and retainers, taking for granted forgiveness for all personal misbehavior, granting to themselves an extra allowance for private squalor. Even royal families, however, are nowadays bound by the proper middle-class standards of their nations.

JOSEPH KENNEDY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In any case, with the publication of *The Kennedys* the mystery of our avidity deepens. While the book tells us little that has not already, in bits and pieces, made its way into the public prints, the saga as it is recounted here becomes a kind of twin tribute to the capacity of some to manipulate and of others—us—to be manipulated. Beginning with Joseph P. Kennedy's unblinkered determination to "have it all"—wealth, women, and the unfettered working of his will upon everything and everybody handy, most particularly his children—and ending with the harrowing death in April by drug overdose of his 29-year-old grandson David, the "American drama" of the Kennedys is more than anything a tale of the users and the used.

The details of this manipulation down through three generations are too many and too appalling to cite in full. Take just the male side of the second generation: Joseph P. Kennedy's four sons are first locked up tight within the prison of family and then set upon one another as if they are competing candidates for some private all-star team. Jack, suffering from Addison's disease and a condition of his spine which is later to require fusion surgery, must cover up his condition and join the Navy during World War II. His older brother Joe is in the Air Force. Whatever these two sons are doing for themselves, both are making well-publicized expiation for their father's isolationism, for his softness on Hitler in the '30s. When Jack becomes a hero, he does not fail to mention that he has reached this eminence before Joe has had a chance to see action. Joe, in response, insists upon volunteering for one last, extremely dangerous mission. He is killed. Later, when Jack is running for President, Bobby, by this time settled into a job he loves, is ordered home to Jack's campaign, and obediently returns. As Attorney General in Jack's Administration—who but a Kennedy would have dared make such an appointment?—Bobby serves as both the family watchdog in the White House and a major influence on foreign policy. With great and sudden assurance he determines upon the assassination of Fidel Castro, and will not rest content until his end has been achieved, nagging and hectoring and demanding. Mad schemes are set in motion to satisfy him, schemes of a kind that would never be undertaken by experienced servants of a great nation, that could only have sprung from the minds of men under the thumb of a childish bully. When it is Jack, not Castro, who is assassinated, Bobby is then left knowing something the rest of the country does not know and he dares not say: that his brother's murder may have been an act of retribution. He sinks into depression. His own subsequent Presidential campaign, with its dramatic, if not indeed melodramatic, swing to the left, might in retrospect be seen as *his* expiation. If so, it was an expiation for which he gave up his life.

If there was a crime committed in the Kennedy Administration, it was not a crime so much of criminal intent as of callowness and stupidity, a crime of boys pretending to wear the shoes of men; and it was met with absolute and unconditional punishment. That is why one's first natural inclination is to say no more about Bobby's role. Peter Collier and David Horowitz are certainly so inclined; Bobby is singled out among the entire family for oddly gentle treatment. The portrait of him omits no detail, yet shows an earnest and sober ex-

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ception to the Kennedy rule—a faithful husband, and affectionate and devoted father, an attentive uncle, and a champion of the needy. Going to great lengths to shield Jack's reputation—God alone knows to what lengths—Bobby is nevertheless shown as sternly disapproving of Jack's compulsive and heedless womanizing.

And yet we know from this book, as well as from the gossip of the time, that earnestness and uprightness did not exactly define him. Anyone who attended parties and gatherings at Bobby and Ethel's home in McLean, Virginia, for instance, ran the risk of being pushed, fully clothed, into the swimming pool. A small and after all humorous indignity, compared with the soul-killing indignities heaped upon others who permitted themselves to stand in loyal service to the family: Arthur Krock, for example, who offered his pen and connections when needed, and was then discarded; or Theodore Sorensen, Robert S. McNamara, and Richard Goodwin, who rushed obediently to the Kennedy compound in Hyannisport after Chappaquiddick to lend their lustrous talents to the tawdry job of providing Teddy with an effective strategy for self-exculpation. It does not do, of course, to make too much of pushing people into pools, which is small beer for a writer compared with the subornation of his pen; still, it does smack of the petty satisfactions of superordination, of the boyish cruelties of the playground. Was Arthur Schlesinger Jr. truly amused, in his heart, to be the dripping wet butt of Bobby and Ethel's pranks? However reluctantly, then, one must include Bobby in the Kennedy sense of special entitlement. Entitled to the Senate, entitled to the White House, entitled to be mean.

IF THE world has been disinclined to speak about Bobby, there is virtually nothing left to say about Teddy. He was the baby brother—"my sunshine," his father used to call him—dragged by a cruel fate into having to pretend to be a serious person. With the Presidency no longer a possibility, and with Massachusetts in his pocket, he is probably, little by little, being relieved of the need for that pretense. Those around him may still dream; but the American people have already indicated that they are not going to elect the hero of Chappaquiddick to the Presidency. Teddy, too, has assumed the mantle of the champion of the downtrodden, but in recent years such championship has become easy and automatic.

Now, of course, there is the third generation to consider. This is the special contribution of Peter Collier and David Horowitz's book. Joseph P. Kennedy had many, many grandchildren, of whom one, David, is dead of a drug overdose. At least one other, Bobby Jr., has sacrificed a budding career to heroin. No doubt some of the remaining young ones are being groomed for a political appearance—politics has become the family business. Like second acts, however, third generations are often a questionable proposition in American lives.

The story of the grandchildren in *The Kennedys* is, to put it mildly, less than appealing. To be sure, we are not fully introduced to all of them. Jack's children, or so we are told, have for their protection been taken out of the family circle, as have the Shriver children. The featured grandchildren in *The Kennedys* are generally Bobby's children. Theirs, too, along with drugs and the concomitant degradation, is a tale of bullying and special entitlements and cover-ups in the Kennedy tradition. The harrowing details—of school expulsions, of ugly practical jokes, of terrorizing the neighbors, of destroying lives with impunity, of alcohol, uppers, downers, and heroin, heroin, and more heroin—seem mainly to have been supplied by the hapless David. As such, they must no doubt be appropriately discounted; junkie misery is always keen to claim company. Even allowing for that, however, there are enough facts to be getting on with. The authors report that after Bobby's assassination his children were neglected by their mother, and left largely untended by the rest of the family (with the notable exception of Eunice Shriver), save when some scandal needed to be silenced; still, they were required to "be Kennedys."

IF A motto were to be devised for Joseph P. Kennedy's coat of arms, it would be "Win or Get Lost." Though no one was left to enforce it, this motto seems to have continued to carry force among the young ones, and they were having a hard time living up to either of its stark alternatives. At least three of Bobby Kennedy's sons—Joe, Bobby Jr., and David, along with their Lawford cousin Christopher and perhaps others—have been able neither to take hold of what Collier and Horowitz call their "special legacy" nor to escape it. The result is infinite sadness and waste.

Which of these boys was to be tapped to inherit the mantle? On the famous funeral train that carried Bobby's body from New York to Washington, it is told, Joe, the eldest, wore his father's suit and impressively played the host. Joe appeared to "have it," the family on that occasion agreed. But there has been little sign of "it" yet: Joe emerges from these pages as being not without strength but quite without real fire. Bobby Jr., seemed to have had the qualifying arrogance, but he spent

HOMESICK IN WOODSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Is the Pacific Sea my home? Or is
Jerusalem? pondered John Donne,
who never stood among these strenuous,
huge, wind-curried hills, their green
gobleted just now with native poppies'
opulent red-gold, where New World lizards run
among strange bells, thistles wear the guise
of lizards, and one shining oak is poison;

or cast an eye on lofted strong-arm
redwoods' fog-fondled silhouette,
their sapling wisps among the ferns in time
more his (perhaps) than our compeer: here at
the round earth's numbly imagined rim,
its ridges drowned in the irradiating vat
of evening, the land ends; the magnesium
glare whose unbridged nakedness is bright

beyond imagining, begins. John Donne,
I think, would have been more at home
than the frail wick of metaphor I've brought
to see by, and cannot for the conflagration
of this nightfall's utter strangeness.

AMY CLAMPITT

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it on believing that he was not the ordinary junkie that he was, and on traveling from his place of work as an Assistant District Attorney in New York to his suppliers in Harlem; whether it has survived his overdosing on an airplane and being forced to resign remains to be seen. David appears to have been both the most imaginative and the most honest. Perhaps he was, on that very account, the one most hopelessly mired in the utter chaos he was making of his life.

ALL IN all, on every side, it is a sordid story. After David's death, we were invited by the family and press to pity the little boy he had once been, sitting alone in a hotel room on that dreadful night in 1968, watching his father being shot down on television. But here, it must be said, was no more than another official Kennedy excuse, in its way the most presumptuous and heartless of all. The suicide by drug overdose of any beautiful young man must be the occasion only for a helpless and bitter prostration before God. Why are some young men determined junkies when others are not? This is finally a question no mere psychologist (or press release) can answer.

Peter Collier and David Horowitz attempt to answer it by a kind of wholesale indictment of the family. Their case boils down to the family's wishing to burnish its public image at the expense of its offspring. They provide enough material to make that indictment persuasive. Possibly the nastiest story in this entire book is the story of Ethel dancing solicitously around the hospital bedside of David's girlfriend Pam Kelley—who was paralyzed for life as the result of an accident in which a jeep being driven recklessly by Joe turned over—as that poor child was returning to consciousness. Ethel had been the girl's sworn enemy, but she was now plying her with smiles and attentions. (Miss Kelley was to receive a large and privately arranged settlement.)

Possibly the saddest story, on the other hand, is the story of Lem Billings, Jack's intimate friend from school days on. Billings, who never married, turned his home and his life into a Kennedy shrine, and sought among the third generation a replacement for his beloved Jack. Bobby Jr., was elected. Since Billings, as they say, couldn't beat him, he joined him; the young man and his aging friend did drugs together, Billings ending his days a serious addict. So much abdication of moral responsibility, for the young and on behalf of the young, can never be excused; still, it is not fair to blame others, even their mother, for the self-destruction of Bobby's sons. Like everyone else in the world, in the end they themselves chose their lives.

None of this answers the question, however, the important public question, of how it was that this loyal but loveless family, this fiercely ambitious but almost as fiercely careless family, came to dominate the political imagination of the country. Jack had a kind of princeliness, and Bobby came to be, in his way, touching. And both were murdered within five years. It is as if the nation still owes the Kennedys something.

Nevertheless, we sometimes forget how far from inevitable America's romance with them was—how much it all, like Jack's election, hung by a thread. (If Joseph P. Kennedy, for instance, had had his way with fate, Joe Jr. would have been the candidate, and surely, given his forthright adherence to his father's political views, he would have lost.) While the Kennedys in some measure account for their role in the life of the country, they have had a great deal of outside help in the shaping of their collective political identity. This they received from a long string of devoted and gifted intellectuals, men who hung around (some of them still do) to be of service in various ways. They sent forth the word to the liberal community that whatever was the going Kennedy policy of the moment was in keeping with that community's true aspirations, following which they redefined those aspirations to suit. Since defining the liberal agenda has been first and foremost the function of intellectuals, they were powerfully effective in their matchmaking. They put good words into the mouths of Kennedys, and good words into the press about the Kennedys. They gave them a personal and cultural luster that was, to say the least, somewhat misplaced. They offered clever rationales for Kennedy policies, many of them disastrous; and when disasters struck, they provided equally clever rationales for why the Kennedys were not really responsible. They helped, by keeping silent or by affecting amusement, to quash scandals, and they found skillful ways to apologize when, as at Chappaquiddick, they had to. Never have politicians had at their command so rich a fund of publicist talent so utterly

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subordinated to their interests.

Partly, no doubt, it was some special charm of the Kennedys that secured for them this special kind of service. In greater part, however, all of this must be accounted an accident of history. The moment had come—a moment, in fact, that had been building for years—when the intellectuals were set to make their bid for power. Adlai Stevenson having funked, Jack Kennedy was presented to them as the instrument of their rightful accession.

Nearly a quarter-century has passed and even the most loyal of Kennedy's intellectuals must by now have recognized that their chosen instrumentality is a shambles. To judge by this book, it will not very easily ever be put together again. One of these days, some fortunate politician will become the new object of their striving. Whoever he is, it will probably take him a little time to believe his dumb luck.

THE EMIGRANT AS HERO

The Engineer of Human Souls
by Josef Skvorecky
translated by Paul Wilson

(Knopf, 571 pp., $17.95)

After spending the first year of my two-year leave from Warsaw University at Yale, I spent the second, and what was to have been my last, year in the United States lecturing at Berkeley. I was supposed to return to Warsaw University in the fall of 1968 at the latest, but as early as the winter of 1967, the news from Poland was getting grimmer. Friends warned me not to return. "Stay as long as you can!" In the letters that got by the censors, they wrote about an anticipated "night of long knives," about what was almost outright anti-Semitism in the Party apparatus, and about the increasingly brutal attacks on revisionists.

At the same time, in Czechoslovakia, the system of oppression was slowly crumbling. Letters from my Czech friends were full of optimism. It was then, probably in December 1967, that people were beginning to write about "socialism with a human face." I was invited to lecture at Karol University in Prague in the fall and I accepted. I thought that I would be close to Poland in Prague, and that if I could wait out the storm, I might be able to return to Poland in time for a renewal. The "Prague spring" did not even last three months. In March 1968, Soviet tanks rolled into Prague; and "fraternal" Polish armies crossed the Czech border to defend socialism. In Warsaw, there were "anti-Zionist" marches and rallies. Friends feared pogroms. In 1968, I became an "emigrant." Josef Skvorecky became one in that year, too.

The word "alien" derives from the Latin *alienus*, *alius*, meaning "other." An "alien" is a human transplant carried over to foreign soil. An "alien" is an exile, a refugee, an émigré or an emigrant, whether by his own will or by dint of necessity. For fifty years the predicament of the emigrant has become almost the universal experience of the second half of the twentieth century. How many of these "aliens" are there in the world? Not even the High Commissioner for Refugee Affairs at the U.N. is capable of giving an approximate number. Are there ten, fifty, or a hundred million of them? Of these millions of refugees and displaced persons, the emigrants from Central Europe (which was also geographically displaced to Eastern Europe after the Yalta Agreements) make up only a small percentage. But it is not everywhere that history reveals its destructive force and is let off the leash (as one of my old teachers was wont to say) at the same time. The Hungarian emigrants of 1956, the Czechs of 1968, the Poles of the "infamous March" of 1968, and the Poles who left Poland after the defeat of Solidarity in 1981, all bring with them experiences which, for the lucky non-aliens of Western Europe and America, are a history lesson as bitter as it is instructive.

The oldest of these emigrants were born at the beginning of the First World War and were already in their 20s at the outbreak of World War II. In many cases they experienced both the Nazi occupation and Stalinist terror on their own soil. For the younger emigrants, the first history lesson came in 1968; for the youngest, in December 1981. But young or old, all of these refugees from Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia had behind them three months (or even three weeks) of hope. It was only when the renewal turned out to be an illusion that they decided to emigrate, often to a country where there was also no hope, but in which life was at least free from fear:

> The Toronto skyline is more beautiful to me than the familiar silhouette of Prague Castle. There is beauty everywhere on earth, but there is greater beauty in those places where one feels that sense of ease which comes from no longer having to put off one's dreams until some improbable future—a future inexorably shrinking away; where the fear which has pervaded one's life suddenly vanished because there is nothing to be afraid of. . . .

Thus the first-person narrator of *The Engineer of Human Souls*, the Czech writer Danny Smiricky, who left his country in 1968 and who, like Josef Skvorecky, teaches English literature in Toronto. Except for the fact that the name of the college has been altered (from Erindale to Edenvale), the incidents and dates connected with the main character and the author are identical. Skvorecky's novel does not seem to fit into the category of either autobiography or novel, which accounts for its orginality. Yet the communication of an experience and its scope is far more important than artistic innovation.

IN *The Engineer of Human Souls*, there is a present time and many past times. The present time takes place in the mid-1960s in the Canadian vale of Eden in Toronto. The past times encompass the '40s, '50s, and '60s in Czechoslovakia. But these pasts do not organize themselves chronologically, nor are they rendered as a steady stream of reminiscences. Instead the book unexpectedly cuts away, like a camera, to foreign landscapes and other times. The constant jumping back and forth from one time to another seemed to me, at first reading, to be an overwrought narrative sophistication, a needless obstacle for the reader to overcome in following the vicissitudes of the characters.

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Later I realized that the author was right. The past always remains in the memory in a tangled synchrony. And an emigrant's past, more than anyone else's, is a second present time. It keeps opening, like a badly healed wound.

The past also returns in another way: in letters. The narrative in Skvorecky's novel, from the first chapter to the last, is constantly being interrupted by letters from Czechoslovakia and the four corners of the earth, to which all his old friends and acquaintances have been scattered. These letters, too, seemed schematic and superfluous at first, an interference with the narrative; again, about halfway through the book, I had to admit that the author was correct in including this minor epistolary novel in his work. The biographies of each of us emigrants—and this is even more true of emigrant writers—are discontinuous, as if they were cut off midway and made up of two sections which do not want to grow together. And the biographies of our friends, of those friends who remained behind and of those who left, are also discontinuous. They are full of blank pages, empty years. It is only in letters that the stories of their lives merge and form one collective destiny.

BUT past time returns not only in letters. Acquaintances come to visit, sometimes only the acquaintances of acquaintances; musicians or actors on tour; the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian wives of foreigners; provocateurs; informers; police agents of both sexes on special assignment. The past of the political émigré is never quite closed or written off as a loss once and for all. There are always some unsettled accounts that are usually quite personal and quite common. Each letter from the homeland fills one of these blank pages, as does each encounter.

At all those emigrant gatherings in all the vales of Eden, the New Havens or Stony Brooks, the conversations are carried on in the native tongue of the particular group. In the first hour, before the bottle of slivovitz or vodka is emptied, every second sentence is patiently translated into broken English for the Canadian husbands or American boyfriends. (What for? They don't understand a thing, anyway!) The emigrants talk about nothing but their native land. How it had been there, and how it will be in the future. You really think that it could happen one more time? In *our* lifetime? Each person tells his own story; the life stories of the emigrants are a chapter out of the collective history of that country. The weaving of a collective destiny from incoherent and astigmatic scraps of reminiscences, pieces of paper, and eternal conversations: these are the only things that make up the "recovered time" of the emigrants.

PREMA Skocdopole was the narrator's colleague in the small city of Kostelec, not far from the Austrian border. He formed a group of saboteurs to resist the Nazis, and in the third year of the war it destroyed a German warehouse. In 1948, after Beneš's death, when the Communist dictatorship became an obvious fact and the prisons were quickly filling with old members of the nationalist group "Sokols" and then the Social Democrats (all labeled "agents of imperialism"), Prema formed a new undergound group in the same town. He was, it turned out, incorrigible. The narrator visits him:

> I had come from Prague just for a visit, with no idea that they had set up any kind of organization. . . . It was the same as the one I'd got mixed up in four years before simply by taking pictures of Prema's heroic act of sabotage against the Nazis. Only the adversary was different. This time it was the Communists. The decisive factor in each instance was the circumscription of freedom, but with my smattering of university Marxism I could not really understand what a worker from a tobacco warehouse, like Prema, needed intellectual freedom for.

The group prints leaflets and sets up clandestine radio transmitters. Everybody gets caught. Prema is the only one to escape from being captured during a raid. He flees abroad. In 1952 he sends his first letter. He writes of being kept in a transit camp for the displaced near Regensburg in West Germany. He cannot get out, he knows no foreign language, and there is no one in the whole world who can vouch for him. He is recruited into the Foreign Legion. ". . . it was worse than in the books. We were in the Sahara and they gave us basic training for Indochina. There were six of us Czechs all told." He runs away when their transport ship is moored off Spain. He is captured and sits in various prisons until they send him to a camp for stateless persons in Sicily. In the camp there are SS men and Fascists from the Croatian police. They beat him to a pulp when they find out who he is. He applies for a visa to the United States, but is rejected because of a decayed tooth.

The next letter is from Sydney in 1956, four years later. He has made it to Australia and then illegally to New Guinea, where he gets work at an oil refinery. He sleeps and eats in barracks, saves every penny, and after a year returns to Australia, where he buys a piece of land. "I always did like the idea of being a farmer best. . . . " In March 1968 he sells the farm because he cannot stand the loneliness. He sets the money aside. He wants to return. "The word here is that this Dubček is giving an amnesty for political offenses." He finally gets to Czechoslovakia in October. This is after freedom and after Dubček. He is given forty-eight hours to pack his bags. The last letter is from Australia once again. He works in construction. He earns a good salary, but is alone.

> I tell you, buddy, it's no place for us to be any more back home, we aren't used to holding our tongue all the time and sitting tight in one spot, it's just not the place for us any more.

He dies in a hurricane in 1977, in the

"REP. TED WEISS (D., N.Y.) says: 'There is no way of distinguishing what we are doing in Grenada and what [the Soviets] have done in Afghanistan.' We can think of one way. If the culprit is an imperialist aggressor, illegitimately occupying a foreign state for four years, practicing genocide against its civilian populace, destroying its crops and villages, firebombing women and children, testing illegal weapons and using 'yellow rain,' and dropping booby-trapped toys to maim children, it's the Soviets."

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city of Darwin on the northern coast of Australia.

The blank pages are slowly filling up. Even on the boundless expanses of Russia there is always a trace that remains of the millions of camp victims: a creased card with a few words for loved ones, a few exchanged words when transports pass each other, a remembered face or handshake. Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia are not large countries. But the emigrants, refugees, and exiles from Central Europe are in all the countries of the world.

AND STILL another fate: Rebecca Silbernaglova. Before the war, she and the narrator used to go swimming together. It is likely that she had a crush on him. In the novel, we read only her letters. The first is from January 1944 from a camp in Terezin before she is transported out. She asks that he keep a miniature portrait of her mother. After the war, she is brought back on a stretcher, an expiring skeleton. She had been in Auschwitz to the very end, but had somehow survived. The next letter is from Braunau in 1953. Her husband has been arrested on charges of being a Zionist, and she works in a textile plant, the new labor camp. She cannot take a day's leave and has no money. She asks for Swiss medicine for her ailing son. The next letter, seven years later, is from Israel. Rebecca is living with her son in a kibbutz. And after another seven years, in 1967:

> Daniel, I only hope the peace lasts ten years at least. But our Slavonic brothers will certainly do their best to ensure that it won't last that long. So I'll hope for at least five years. At least five.

Her last letter is from Tel Aviv in 1974. Her son and daughter-in-law die when a bomb planted in the center of the city explodes.

> For the first time in my life I've said to myself what the women in Auschwitz would say when their husbands, their children, their families, everyone was killed: Why couldn't I have gone up that chimney too?

In *The Engineer of Human Souls*, individual fates make up the common lot. They are instances of the Great Mechanism: the steamroller crushing the ants. Skvorecky is interested in exemplary lives. He is shamelessly real, like Solzhenitsyn. The most astonishing thing in this epic novel about the annihilation of people, however, is the laughter. It is not "black humor" or "laughter through tears." It is plain, ordinary, and hearty laughter—Schweik's laughter, which rings out in Skvorecky as it does in Kundera. When there is no hope or consolation, there is still laughter—bawdy laughter. This slightly archaic word "bawdy," bawdy but never indecent, seems appropriate here for Skvorecky. Bawdy laughter is good medicine, as the old carnival wisdom teaches. And it is not an accident that many scenes in *The Engineer of Human Souls* take place, as in Jaroslav Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik*, in the latrine. In 1936 when I was in the army, I was taught: "Only the house is peaceful evermore, which has never known the state of war." Conversations in the army, camp, or factory latrine, are always full of civilian wisdom. In times of war and terror, the only refuge of civilized conversation is the latrine, the only place free from fear.

THE most characteristic feature of Polish theater and Czech prose of the last quarter century is the presence in them of a menace which is nevertheless ludicrous. This is not the comic terror so often invented by Western writers of the absurd; it is an observed fact. It is not surrealism; it is superrealism. Kundera, and Mrozek in Poland before him, are peerless in their demonstrations of the absurdity of the menace; but no one will be able to outdo Skvorecky.

The last of the emigrants to show up in Toronto is Dr. Todt, a decent, kindhearted, and nonparty electrical engineering specialist. A year earlier he is officially sent to attend an international conference in London. He returns according to plan, sleeps off the trip, and the next day, after a hot bath and coffee with milk, he puts on his slippers and opens the newspaper *Rude Pravo*. On the first page is an article, "The Story of a Traitor." The article is about him, about how he had gone to London for a conference, how he had met each day with the head of the Soviet delegation to get instructions for the following day, how he had read two papers . . . Everything was accurate except that he had not returned and that he had had an interview with the capitalist press about his not returning. Sweet, honest Dr. Todt wipes his glasses and re-reads the article. He keeps telling himself that this could, conceivably, be about someone else, but his name and titles stand out in very bold print.

He quickly runs over to the editorial office of *Rude Pravo*. The senior editor is an old acquaintance and receives him immediately. The editor looks at him and then very carefully at the front page of his newspaper, as if he were looking at it for the first time. Then he says: "Indeed, Citizen Professor, if you are here now, then it seems that you are not in London. But . . . there must be something to this, because we got the information from the Ministry and we didn't change a word of it, except for," and here he smiles knowingly, "correcting the spelling errors."

Dr. Todt then runs over to the appropriate ministry. This time he waits longer, but the chief of the ministry receives him in person. He looks his petitioner up and down carefully and then says : "Indeed, Citizen, if you are here then it seems that"—and here he throws him another scrutinizing look—"you did not remain with the capitalists. But . . . there must be something to this. The information," and here he lowers his voice, "remember, this is a secret, was received from our embassy in London. . . . But don't worry, everything will eventually be explained. Return to your home and workplace."

At the Institute where Dr. Todt had worked, no one would speak to him any longer. Only his faithful secretary would occasionally sneak him a glass of pale, already cooled tea. His phone was bugged and it seemed that someone was always following him. And perhaps someone was. After six months of this, he applies to go abroad on a skiing trip to the Austrian Alps. He uses all of his savings to buy two pairs of skis, a knapsack, sleeping bag, and ski jacket. He never uses the skis, but within a month's time he finds himself in Canada.

THE story of the Prague electrical engineering specialist who was declared a defector before he defected is straight out of Kafka's world, in which "the cage seeks a bird" and the punishment is proof of the guilt. Yet in Skvorecky's work one hears Gogolian laughter (as in *The Inspector General*, where the servant's widow beaten by police has "whipped herself") more than one hears Kafka. That absurd Gogolian dread, which strikes even though it never stops being ridiculous, is not only

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a characteristic of a specific literary genre; it is also a characteristic of a specific system of repression in which contempt for the party apparatus is stronger than fear, and those in power are grotesque and ridiculous because they have come to believe their own lies.

AMONG Skvorecky's literary affiliations, we should name one more: Nabokov. Nabokov was also an emigrant writer, even though he belonged to another epoch, and hailed from a separate cultural sphere. He was a great emigrant in two literatures: Russian and English. He wrote about Russian literature from a Western literary perspective and about English and French classics from the perspective of a Russian writer—a comparatist in the fullest sense of the word, because he was an emigrant in the fullest sense of the word. Skvorecky's hero reads Poe's "The Raven" to his students, but first in Russian, in Jesenin's well-known adaptation:

> *Kak to noch-yu v chas terrora . . .*
> *Karknul Voron:* Nevermore!

And then in his own translation: "Once at night in time of terror . . ." And he concludes with a surprising, startling interpretation which equals Nabokov in its mastery of style: "We have always been surrounded by terror and by the beauty that is an inseparable part of it."

In this Canadian present time of the novel there is also the narrator's romance with his 20-year-old pupil who is fascinated by his lectures on literature. These are not the best pages of *The Engineer of Human Souls*. The girl is the daughter of extremely wealthy Swedish emigrants and has the beauty of a northern goddess. The first love scene takes place on her parents' barge which is moored at lakeshore:

> . . . she seems made of alabaster. She glows like the white goddess in *Trader Horn*, and around her head a golden halo of blonde hair and in the female centre of her body a magnificent golden thicket. . .

She loses her virginity a little later, on the folding seat of her father's Cadillac. The whole romance abounds in clichés, which range from the unbearably sentimental to the even more unbearably vulgar, and its model seems to be the worst of American soap operas. The flatness of these episodes is even more apparent when compared with the wartime love scenes in which there is tenderness and harshness, the smell of flesh and earth, real landscapes and feelings. Long after one has shut the book, one recalls Nada, a worker in the same military factory in Kostelec, in oversized men's boots and raglan, the latter probably sewn long before she was born. Nada is always hungry, and kisses with a mouth still full of the pancakes which the narrator's mother sends him from home.

Of all the times past that are evoked in *The Engineer of Human Souls*, the fullest is the last year of the war, and of all the places recalled, Kostelec is the most distinct. Emigration is always (and not just metaphorically speaking) an emigration from the land of one's childhood and youth. *The Engineer of Human Souls* is a settling of accounts with all the past times of the emigrant. Yet since Josef Skvorecky and Danny Smiricky, author and narrator, emigrated not from Kostelec in 1946, but from Prague in 1968, the absence of the "Prague spring" in this novel written by a political emigrant may seem somewhat odd. But the "Prague spring" only *seems* absent from Skvorecky's novel. It is not there in description or in action, but it is always present as an undercurrent in the narration, in the hope and despair of the refugees. " . . .we need them both, Prague and freedom," says Veronica, the youngest of the refugees, "but the way things are, we can't have both. It's either-or." Prague returns for the last time, via Paris, at the end of the novel. Paris is the first stop in flight from Soviet tanks.

> I remember Paris in 1968. We were standing in front of *Les Deux Magots* like poor relations whose house had just burned down and Milan Kundera said, "I only hope I die soon. There's been too much of everything. How much longer do you think we can last?" I too had felt the longing for death. The Death Wish. The tanks had suddenly turned a theoretical Freudian concept into a real feeling. . . .

One of the most anguished poems in Polish literature was written in the 1830s by the Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, in exile in Paris:

> While my body sits here among you,
> Looks you in the eye and talks aloud,
> My soul leaves and wanders far, o far away,
> It roams about and wails, o how it wails.

The Engineer of Human Souls, written 150 years later, is a novel about the same experience.

JAN KOTT

Jan Kott, the author of *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary* (Norton) and *The Eating of the Gods* (Random House), is currently working on his autobiography: *The History of a Generation*. A collection of his essays, *The Theatre of Essence*, will be published this fall by Northwestern University Press.

MEASURING THE MERITS

Choice and Consequence by Thomas Schelling

(Harvard University Press, 363 pp., $20)

A central subject of economics is human motivation in the aggregate: how the decisions, rational or irrational, of millions of people combine to produce large-scale results. It relies on an understanding of the way in which each individual's decisions are affected by the perception of the motivations of others whose interests may conflict or overlap with his. Game theory studies the rational principles of such interaction.

Thomas Schelling, a subtle and imaginative economist, is distinguished for having extended the economic style of systematic and relatively precise thinking about human interaction into new domains. His famous earlier book, *The Strategy of Conflict*, published in 1960, dealt mostly with war, deterrence, and international relations. While four of the fifteen chapters in this new collection of essays deal with the bomb and related matters, most of it is about other things: the value of life and

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death, organized crime, strategies for conflict of a person with himself, and, somewhat bashfully, ethics.

What makes Schelling such a pleasure to read, apart from his lean, clear, wry conversational style, is the shrewdness and human insight with which he breaks down complex problems and phenomena into their parts, permitting systematic understanding to develop. Some of his observations have the charm one associates with the work of Erving Goffman. For example, have you ever wondered what on earth organized crime was doing in the laundry business, as reported in recent years? Schelling proposes an explanation: it's a particularly efficient avenue for extortion, somewhat more refined and better for both criminal and victim than the traditional crude "protection" racket. Typical victims are restaurants, which are easily disrupted and often individually owned. Forcing them to subscribe to an overpriced monopoly laundry service is better than simply demanding cash because (a) the victim can put the transaction on his books without revealing to creditors or revenue agents that he pays tribute, (b) his embarrassment and loss of self-respect is reduced because he can tell himself, his wife, and his employees that he's merely a victim of excessive laundry prices, (c) the payment is a tax-deductible business expense, so more can be demanded by the extortionist at less cost to the victim.

MOST of the direct victims of organized crime, however, are small illegal businesspersons—bookies, prostitutes—who pass the cost of payoffs on to their customers. They can't complain to the police, and sometimes the police are employed directly by the syndicate to enforce payment, through selective application of the laws. Schelling suggests that the real money that sustains a large criminal organization and makes it look for other opportunities probably has to come from a black-market monopoly, created by the legal prohibition of something for which there is an unquenchable demand. Outlawing novocaine would probably do it, but in fact alcohol seems to have propelled organized crime into economic takeoff in this country during prohibition, and now narcotics provide the infrastructure. Schelling asks

> whether the goal of somewhat reducing the consumption of narcotics, gambling, prostitution, abortion [this essay dates from 1967], or anything else that is forced by law into the black market, is or is not outweighed by the costs to society of creating a criminal industry.

My impression is that he thinks it's not worth it, but here as elsewhere he prefers to analyze the facts that bear on the question rather than to answer it directly. If, as he suggests, most of the harm done by narcotics results from their being illegal and vastly overpriced, they should probably be legalized.

ONE particularly fascinating question to which he is prepared to offer a tentative answer is this: How much should we require people to spend, or spend on their behalf out of tax revenues, on measures which reduce the risk of death? This bears upon the current controversy over requiring air bags in automobiles; but it applies also to medical care, airport safety, lifeboats, smoke alarms, and other lifesaving measures whose costs must be borne by someone, either as consumer or as taxpayer. Schelling proposes that we look at these expenditures from the point of view of their value to the parties whose risk is being reduced, and then ask if from that point of view there would be some better way to spend the money.

This requires an answer to the question of how much a human life is worth to its possessor, which is discussed in the important essay, "The Life You Save May Be Your Own." The first thing to notice is that poor people's lives are worth less to them in monetary terms than rich people's lives are—as measured by what they would spend to reduce the risk of death by a given amount. This is not, of course, because poor people value life less—everybody has only one—but because they value money more, having less of it to meet their most urgent needs.

On the basis of an informal survey of what well-paid professionals would pay for small incremental reductions in the probability of death, Schelling concludes that they value their lives at anywhere from ten to one hundred times a year's income. "In crude numbers this could mean that a Boeing 707 full of professional business people might value their own lives in a way that would make prevention of the fatal crash of a (yet unidentified) full airplane worth about $250 million." (Note that by parallel reasoning, a planeload of migrant farm workers would probably turn out to be worth less than $10 million.)

Schelling believes the state generally shouldn't force people to spend more on safety than it is worth to them: if they'd rather spend that sum on food or rent, let them. But what if the safety measures are paid for out of public funds, or can be provided at affordable cost only if everyone is required to have them? Schelling still wants to ask whether an alternative use of those funds would be worth more to the beneficiaries, so the problem of variation between rich and poor in the monetary value of life becomes acute. Is an amount that is well spent on the safety of flying business executives wasted if spent on the safety or health of garment workers or farm laborers? In determining the value of life for the purpose of assesssing a mandatory or public safety measure, whose evaluation should be used? Should we calculate some kind of average, or should the state spend more on safety for the rich than for the poor?

THIS is not simply a question of distributive justice, because it can be posed even if we are committed to taxing the rich heavily for the benefit of the poor. The question is whether the money should be spent instead on something the poor value more than a given increment of safety. Schelling's instinct, if we can't turn over the money to them and let them decide how to spend it—is to try to simulate the results of such a process in public expenditure. But if this is done, and if we continue to live in an unequal society in which the well-off are taxed not only for the benefit of the poor but also for their own benefit, we may find ourselves with a double standard for public safety.

Schelling recognizes that this may be politically distasteful, but his sympathy for the imposition of equality in specific goods seems limited. After alluding to the fate of different classes in the sinking of the *Titanic* he makes this startling statement:

> We do not tolerate that any more. Those who want to risk their lives at sea and cannot afford a safe ship should perhaps not be denied the opportunity to entrust themselves to a cheaper ship without lifeboats; but if some people cannot afford the price of passage with lifeboats, and some

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people can, they should not travel on the same ship.

The question whether there are goods which, even in a very unequal society like ours, should be provided in equal measure to everyone—even at considerable cost in efficiency and in preference to benefits that the poor might value more—is an important moral question. Schelling's examples pose it vividly, but his uneasiness about moral thinking prevents him from addressing it. He seems to think that for these purposes, we're all in the same boat only if we're all literally in the same boat. But some may feel that the limited concession to equality for its own sake that he admits in the case of the *Titanic* could be extended in certain respects to society as a whole—in regard to the provision of basic medical care, for example.

TWO of the essays are about situations in which an individual can be seen as containing more than one self, simultaneously or in sequence, whose relations to each other may mimic interpersonal strategies: the alcoholic who wants to give up drinking, the smoker who wants to quit, the long-distance runner who wants to keep going despite exhaustion, the chronic procrastinator, the desperate dieter. Schelling's descriptions of the ways we can trick, coerce, and manipulate ourselves as if we were someone else are often perceptive and diverting. Yet his suggestions about how the law might be used to help us control ourselves are not very plausible.

He speculates that we might come to recognize legally binding promises not to smoke, for example, from which a person could not later release himself. But in ordinary interpersonal contracts at a later stage one of the parties can release the other from the agreement they both made earlier. If at any time we are the sole representatives of our earlier selves for these purposes, how could we be denied the authority to overrule our past selves in the intrapersonal case? Either I'm the same person or I'm not; if I am, the decision is up to me at each point; if I'm not, my past self shouldn't be able to call in the law to help force me now to do what he wanted but I never agreed to.

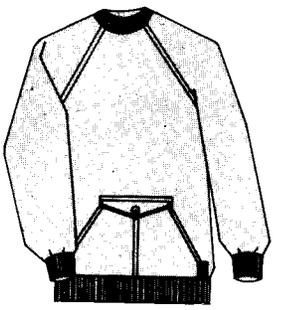
Schelling's discussion here is uncharacteristically weak and lacking in realism. I think the reason is that he hasn't thought hard enough about the concept of personal identity and the fundamental role it plays in morality. In most moral reasoning the basic unit, for purposes of benefit or responsibility, is the temporally extended person, represented at each point in his life by its current stage, with some exceptions for madness and immaturity. The primacy of this unit has been attacked, notably by Derek Parfit in his remarkable book *Reasons and Persons*, but it requires a deeper approach than Schelling can offer. These aren't empirical questions of the kind he likes.

The essays on strategy and nuclear weapons are preceded by a short introduction to game theory, which is then used in the discussion of such matters as the hazards of building weapons as "bargaining chips" and the various ways in which deadly conflict need not be a zero-sum game: there are plenty of choices from which both parties lose or both parties win, and Schelling tries to provide analytic guidance for distinguishing the latter from the former. There's an informative and optimistic chapter on whether small terrorist groups will get the bomb, though Schelling notes that the envisaged uses of nuclear weapons by governments are terrorist in any case. Lest this be taken to have moral implications, he adds: "I imply nothing derogatory or demeaning about strategic nuclear forces by emphasizing the traditional expectation that their primary use is to deter or to intimidate, and thereby to influence behavior, through the threat of enormous civilian damage."

But one shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth. Schelling's analytical power, his shrewdness, his lucidity, and his uneasiness with ethics give his work a unique flavor. In this book he says illuminating things about rent control, gasoline rationing, tax deductions, euthanasia, nuclear proliferation, whether parents should fly in separate planes, and many other topics. Wherever one's political sympathies may lie, it is an invaluable resource for posing and thinking about difficult social questions.

THOMAS NAGEL

Thomas Nagel is a professor of philosophy at New York University and the author of *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton University Press) and *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press).



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THE FAKED AND THE DEAD

Tough Guys Don't Dance
by Norman Mailer

(Random House, 229 pp., $16.95)

You have felt the urge. You're sitting at your desk, surrounded by hills of unpaid bills, when suddenly it hits you: you'll take a month off, write a mystery, and make a modest killing. Most of us resist that urge. Unhappily, Norman Mailer did not. *Tough Guys Don't Dance*, Mr. Mailer's first try at the mystery genre, is an embarrassment—and a warning. If a writer of Mr. Mailer's large talent and even larger ambition can't manage a mystery, what chance have you got?

Tough Guys is set in Provincetown, in gray November. (Mr. Mailer captures the emotional geography of the Cape in winter with a concreteness of detail and evocativeness of imagery that deserts him when he puts his prose to other tasks.) The hero is a 40-year-old ex-bartender and writer named Tim Madden; and the subject is murder, or it would be if Mailer had kept his well-known obsessions—with cancer, courage, and the interpenetration of spiritual forces—from blighting the few shoots of suspense that pop their heads above the thick surface slush of philosophy.

As the novel opens Mr. Madden's wife, Patty Lareine, has left him, for reasons that remain unclear to me, and to console himself he seduces a woman he meets in a local bar, even though she is accompanied by another man. I say seduces, but really all he does is expose himself to her. He being a Mailer man, the sight is impressive; she being a Mailer woman, it is irresistible.

The next day he awakes with an amnesia-inducing hangover to confront the following realizations: that blood is smeared over the front seat of his Porsche, that the Provincetown Police Chief is curious as to the whereabouts of Patty Lareine, and that the foot locker where he hides his dope now also contains the head of a blonde. Is it the woman from the bar or Patty Lareine? Hysterical, Madden flies from the locker without finding out. Meanwhile other characters are being introduced and, in the manner of horror films, quickly killed off. Soon the locker contains two blonde heads. Just in the nick of time, Madden's dad, a garrulous longshoreman and Maileresque philosopher, arrives to help his son clear his name and discover the real murderer.

The chief suspects are the Police Chief, Patty Lareine's ex-husband and sundry Provincetown toughs, including one man who films his copulations with his lover: "It was awful to see. He used to urinate on her, there also for us to see on the TV screen. He had grown a wispy-light-brown D'Artagnan mustache which he would tweak like a villain while he hosed her down. . . . " And more in that vein. Mr. Mailer's male characters are nearly all mouthpieces for him, so vanity dictates that he make them at least a tad interesting. Not so his women. As in pornography, they are merely sexual appendages.

The writing is laced with campy implication; one can see why *Vanity Fair* ran two excerpts from the novel. "On the Cape, in winter, nothing ever came right to the point," a sentence reminds, just as we are getting fed up with the plot's refusal to do just that. On the other hand there are such unintentionally revealing sentences as "My mind was yawing like a wind in the hills." Well, I wouldn't have put it quite that cruelly. And of course there are the old familiar Mailer phrases ". . . you could sit down and take a taste of the marrow of the mood . . ."; and the too familiar Maileresque identifications with criminality, ". . . I gained (could I term it that) some small measure of compassion for all who are afflicted by the compulsion to go out and do what is absolutely not to be done—whether it is the seduction of little boys or the rape of adolescent girls. . . ." One has to keep reminding oneself that this novel is the work of a man now past sixty, for nothing in it would.

Dull, turgid, bare of wit, *Tough Guys* makes painful reading, especially for those of us who honor Mailer's power as a writer and a visionary. Perhaps if candidates were paid large sums of money to run for public office, Mailer could afford to make a fool of himself by launching another campaign for mayor of New York. That way he would get it out of his system, and would not need to repeat this successful experiment in literary humiliation.

JACK BEATTY

Jack Beatty is a senior editor at *The Atlantic Monthly*.

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit by Sherry Turkle (Simon & Schuster). The inner consequences of the new technology. (Reviewed 8/13&20/84)

Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm by Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge University Press). Marx meets Buddha in Siberia; a scholarly study of a strange corner of the world. (8/6/84)

Motives for Fiction by Robert Alter (Harvard University Press). Occasional critical writings that transcend their occasion. (7/9/84)

Infante's Inferno by G. Cabrera Infante (Harper & Row). Outrageous memories of a Havana boyhood. (7/9/84)

Concrete by Thomas Bernhard (Knopf). A study of despair by a major Austrian novelist. (8/13&20/84).

Behind the Mask: On Sexual Demons, Sacred Mothers, Transvestites, Gangsters, Drifters and Other Japanese Cultural Heroes by Ian Buruma (Pantheon). Everything you wanted to know. (8/13&20/84)

Advice and Support: The Early Years, 1941-1960 by Ronald H. Spector (Center of Military History, U.S. Army). The accomplished first volume in a history of the Army's tortuous experience in Vietnam. (7/2/84)

An American Procession by Alfred Kazin (Knopf). The brilliant culmination of a critic's lifelong look at American literature. (6/18/84)

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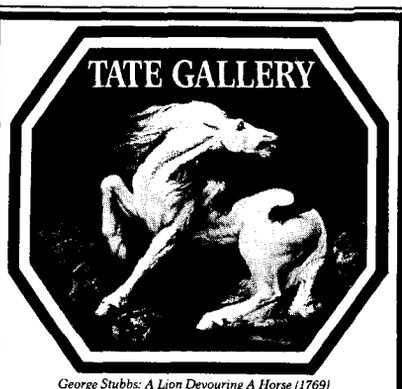

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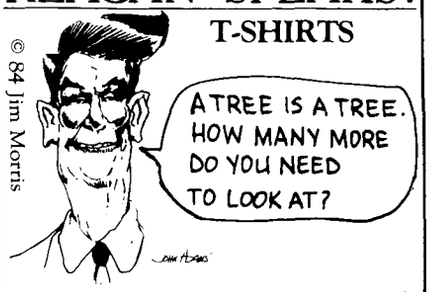

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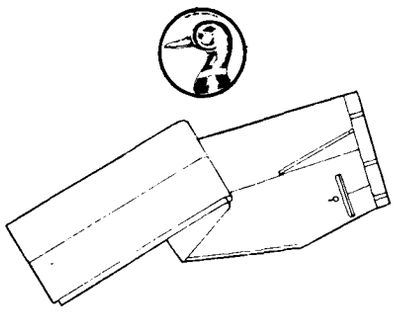

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

ing for blacks is unacceptable. We need not make the easy assumption that only with a minimum percentage of black residents will public housing attract whites—enhanced services, upgraded living units, even increased amenities in precisely those housing projects *with* a high percentage of minorities may well compensate for white fears. It perverts the purpose of integration to use it to justify denying those services to members of precisely those groups integration is supposed to help.

DAVID C. SOBELSOHN
Cleveland, Ohio

CHASIN' MASONS

To the editors:

Nicholas von Hoffman's evocation of the Antimasonic Party in "Brawly Confabulations" (TNR, July 30) contained but one small error: William Morgan, the would-be Masonry muckraker, was tidily disposed of in September 1826, not 1829. Morgan, who was kidnapped in Canandaigua, New York, was most probably transported west, bound, tied to a weight, and dumped into the Niagara River. Prior restraint has seldom been so forcefully imposed.

In addition to convention-holding, the Antimasons (whose ranks included such upwardly mobile types as Millard Fillmore and William Seward) were given to bursts of memorable rhetoric. In 1830 one New York zealot said of his Masonic foes, "If I could have the brains of a lot of them, mixed with their hearts' blood, and cooked, it would be the sweetest meal that I ever ate—I desire no better food." Certainly *that* pol never had to grapple with the wimp factor.

ROBERT M. KAPLAN
Brooklyn, New York

INJURED IACOCCA

To the editors:

The derogatory and self-serving article on Lee Iacocca ("The Iacocca Mystique," TNR, July 16 & 23) would not sell the paper it is written on were he not so prominent and successful. He will long be remembered as the son of an Italian immigrant who accomplished the dream of success that is only possible in this great country of ours.

J. E. PRISIN-ZANO
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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Naked Lunch

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, said its president, John Fogarty of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, has welcomed "Kings and Queens, Presidents and Prime Ministers, dissidents and defectors," and was glad, on this torrid Monday afternoon, to bring to its "honorable and honest forum" Minister Louis Farrakhan. The sentence struck me as a kind of Miller Analogy Test of moral judgment, which Fogarty had flunked. He went on to apprise his audience of the speaker's early career as a singer: "He still plays the violin . . . he prefers Mozart," and so on. Finally Fogarty wrapped up this little Dewar's profile of the demagogue, and Farrakhan, surrounded by his bodyguards, stepped to the stage, to the stare of lenses and the cackle of shutters. What followed was a definitive demonstration of the amorality of the American press.

FARRAKHAN SPOKE SWEETLY and dripped poison. He delivered himself of a fine synopsis of his violent view of the world: the chosenness of the black people, the fall from chosenness of the Jewish people, the moral and political preferability of a separate black state. A student of religious anthropology could recognize some of the classical elements of radical millenarianism in this sermon by this "warner." Indeed, there were many ancient associations in this lecture to the lunching fourth estate. Numerological interpretations of Genesis 15, for example, were designed to establish 1985 as the year of black redemption. And at last I was made to understand the centrality of the Jews in Farrakhan's mind. The blacks, he said, are "the true Israel"; I was stunned to see before me, all these centuries after Justin Martyr, a repetition of the logic that launched anti-Semitism in Christian Europe. It has always been theologically and psychologically necessary for the "true Israel" to hate the "false Israel"—that is, for the new Israel to hate the old Israel. Thus this leech on "the spirit of love" proceeded to repeat his "dirty religion" remark about Judaism, to paint a picture of an America in bondage to "Jewish interests," to warn that the Jewish state "will prove to be the destruction of the Western world." The Palestinians and their supporters, for whom Farrakhan is suddenly a spokesman (the table directly beneath the microphone at the Press Club was occupied by satisfied Arabs), must see that his sympathy for them originates in a good old-fashioned theological hostility to the Jews. He does not dilate upon suffering to which the Jews have no relation.

THE JOURNALISTS hanging on these wicked words seemed dead to all this. They wanted to know only if Jesse Jackson would appear (no; he was at Aretha Franklin's father's funeral), and if Farrakhan would approve of Geraldine Ferraro (I don't remember, because I don't care), and generally if there were any more sensations that they could squeeze from this sudden eruption of the extremity of black religious sectarianism into the center of American political life. Like any cult in working condition, the Nation of Islam had packed the hall as well as it could, and the minister's passionate pleas for black separatism were enthusiastically greeted; I thought that James Baldwin had refuted this particular style of black nationalism twenty years ago. But Farrakhan's rising rhetoric against Israel met with more applause than the number of his followers could provide. There were boos, too; but the loudest were visited by the Fruit of Islam. They are Farrakhan's bow-tied, muscle-bound bodyguards. One such fruit put himself in front of one such booer; from the gallery I could see him whispering in the gentleman's ear and pointing to the door. To no effect, it seemed; until the gentleman's white-haired wife wrote him a nervous note ("Seymour, let's get out of here . . ."), and out the door they went. The fruit watched closely as the door closed behind them; satisfied that the danger of a different opinion had been met, he returned to his place near the speaker, from which the "honorable and honest forum" could be better monitored.

IT WAS NOT LONG before the great American publicity machine cranked up. The evening news loved it; some stations led with the story. Mary McGrory reported in *The Washington Post* that "he is fit, fresh-faced, and nattily dressed": sort of a Jaycee with a thought of *jihad*. (The sartorial consequences of the Rainbow Coalition may be considerable. Jackson has usurped the tie bar and Farrakhan has usurped the bowtie; if they're not careful, they'll lose the WASPS too.) Reaching into the wrong bag of excuses, Miss McGrory observed that "his remarks were anti-Zionist rather than anti-Semitic." A few days later Dorothy Gilliam, one of the stylish black reporters on the Press Club dais whom Farrakhan insulted for their success in American society, published in the same paper a column of sheer celebrity interest: "Louis Farrakhan is a man in transition. . . . [H]is style was different. I wanted to know what is changing him and who he is today." Or, will Louis Farrakhan ever find happiness?

IT IS OFTEN SAID that the press victimizes people with publicity. In fact, it victimizes people most often with publicity about other people. Do these journalists who pride themselves on the impartiality of their profession appreciate that they are polluting the public debate and playing into the hands of hatred when they do anything except thunder at the likes of Farrakhan? Some do; the editorial board of the *Post*, and most eloquently its columnist Carl Rowan, attacked the meretriciousness of the event. They understood the strong symbolic significance of the certificate of appreciation that the Press Club presented to its guest. Farrakhan has won celebrity, alas. Must he win legitimacy, too? But granting legitimacy, some of the press may protest, is the risk that their objectivity runs. Better some light misplaced than no light at all. Maybe. But they are not objective; they are only amoral. They, too, have their favorite freaks. Meir Kahane will not lunch at 14th and F Streets. (Thank heaven for little favors.) Nor will the Imperial Wizard. I'm sure that the press has quite forgotten the name of the head of the Ku Klux Klan. The press should forget the name of the head of the Nation of Islam too. (Where is its famous short memory when you need it?) Its probity, which properly put Farrakhan's personal threats and political allegiances on the front page, has turned to prurience. Its service to the American people in the Farrakhan affair is long over; all it provides now are cheap thrills. Let him retire to the inflammations of his own imagination. He is yesterday's news.

L.W.

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